**Solomon Germplasm thickspike wheatgrass**

*Elymus macrourus (Agropyron macrourum)*

**Selected Class Release “Natural”**

### Uses: Revegetation Throughout Alaska

**Match the species and seed source to the intended planting site**

For best growth and revegetation, plants native to an area create a more permanent habitat.

**Solomon Germplasm thickspike wheatgrass**

- **Plant Identification Number:** 9097727

Solomon Germplasm thickspike wheatgrass comes from Solomon, Alaska (August 10, 1995). Originally identified as *Agropyron macrourum*, the most current scientific name is *Elymus macrourus*.

The seed from the parent (Solomon) plant is grown and harvested at the Plant Materials Center and by other seed growers.

Some agencies require the original seed to be collected within a certain circumference around where the revegetation will take place.

An example of this is at Denali National Park. They use a locally collected seed mix of a native legume (*Hedysarum alpinum*) and wheatgrass (*Elymus macrourus*). By planting both species at the same time, Densmore (2000) states that the resulting product can withstand mowing and light scraping—as well as resist invasive weeds.

This same method is practical throughout Alaska where the seed source material is not so strictly regulated.

Roadsides which are well-drained, nutrient-poor, sandy, or gravelly can successfully be established in about 5 years with a mix of Solomon Germplasm thickspike wheatgrass and alpine sweetvetch (*Hedysarum alpinum*).

### Wheatgrass in the Wild—

- is considered a colonizer and an indicator of disturbed sites (Tsvelev, 1983);
- is drought-tolerant, long-lived, and forms sod;
- can be found on riverbanks subject to fluctuating erosion;
- plays an important part in natural revegetation—as a nurse plant for other species.

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**Background and Growth**

*Elymus macrourus* is native to Alaska. It is found on open slopes, gravel or sand bars, and earth embankments in tundra and woodlands (Hultén, 1968).

Thickspike wheatgrass is usually found on well-drained soils. It is a long-lived perennial.

It reproduces by seed or (rarely) vegetatively via rhizomes. It is self-fertile (Sullivan, 1993).

This grass grows in clumps and can grow to about 3 feet tall. Its leaf blades are narrow, mostly green but sometimes bluegreen. With its seed spike, it is a beautiful grass.

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**Alaska Plant Materials Center**

*Serving Alaska’s needs in production of Alaska native plants*

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Map from Hultén, 1968. Used with the permission of Stanford University

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Jan. 9, 2008
To Produce Solomon:

Solomon Germplasm thickspike wheatgrass grows better in fine-textured soils. Drill it about 1/2 inch deep.

Light irrigation will help its growth. Keep weeds controlled. Seeding can begin either in early spring or fall.

Thickspike wheatgrass has an approximately 8 inch seed head, making it easy to harvest with normal farm devices. Its seed spike ripens in late summer, causing it to be one of the last grasses harvested.

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References


