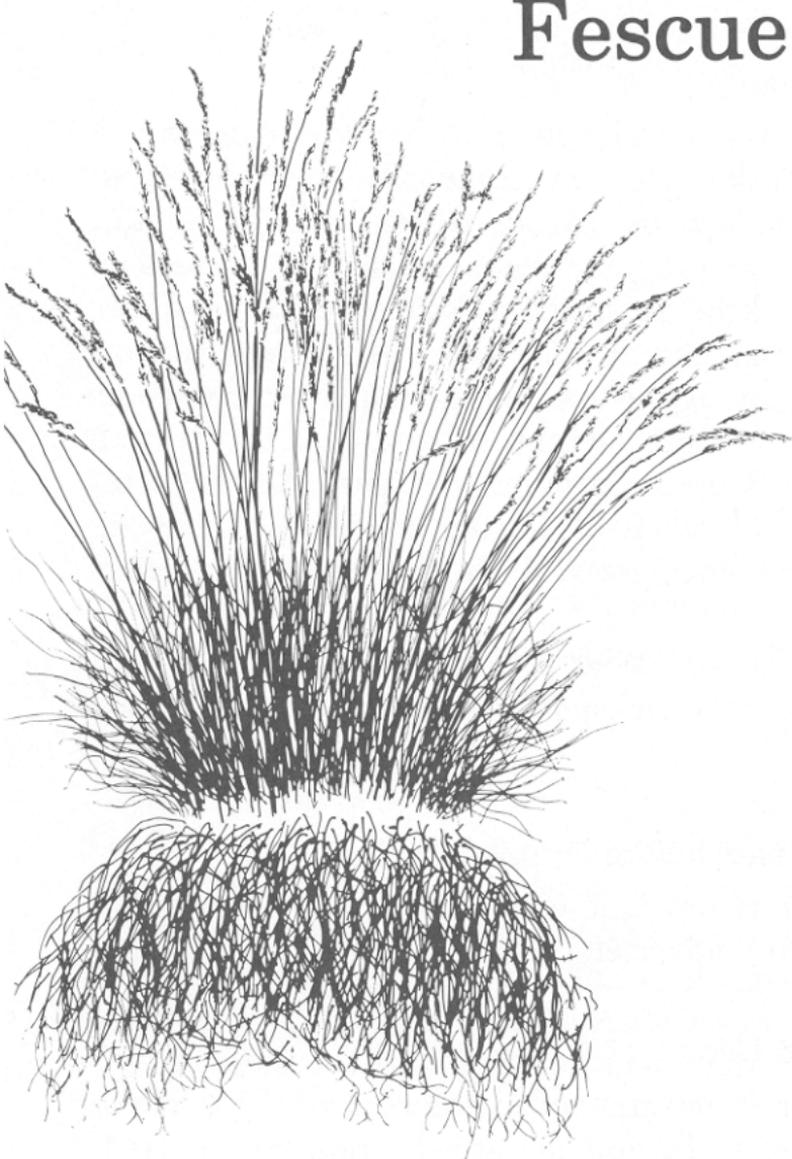


Covar Sheep Fescue



Cooperative Extension

College of Agriculture
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COVAR SHEEP FESCUE

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Covar sheep fescue is a dwarf, blue-green, densely tufted, erect-growing perennial bunchgrass with abundant fine stems. Leaves are narrow, short, stiff, basal, and abundant. The name Covar was selected to identify with "cover."

The Washington Agricultural Research Center, WSU, and the Agriculture Experiment Stations of Oregon and Idaho cooperated with the Pullman Plant Materials Center, Soil Conservation Service, USDA. in its release.

Development

Covar was developed from material collected in Konya, Turkey. It was compared with numerous other fescue strains. In one 6-year herbage production study, it produced an average 850 pounds of forage per acre, as much as Idaho fescue, a native species. Trial plantings in the tri-state region show Covar is an aggressive competitor that forms an attractive drought-tolerant, erosion-control cover. It is a more desirable groundcover than Sherman big bluegrass, Durar hard fescue, creeping red fescue, and crested wheatgrass in 10-14 inches annual rainfall areas.

Covar is somewhat slow to establish. Once established it is very persistent, winter-hardy, and drought tolerant.

Disease and Insect Problems

Covar is resistant to common turf diseases. No insects have adversely affected it to date.

Proposed Uses

Covar is recommended for controlling soil erosion in areas having an annual rainfall of 10-17 inches. It is well adapted for roadbanks, in terraces or diversions, as dryland turf, in waterways, on steep slopes planned for permanent cover, and other critical areas subject to erosion. It is not intended as a forage plant or for grazing although it is palatable to livestock.

Seed Production

It is a prolific and reliable seed producer. In 36-inch rows, dryland production at Pullman, Washington, ranged from 300-500 pounds per acre. Seed does not have to be deawned and is easily cleaned. Seed may be produced under dryland or with irrigation. Adequate isolation is needed from other fescues for certified seed production.

Seeding Recommendations

Covar may be seeded in the fall (late October to mid-November) or spring. Fall seeding is preferred in the low rainfall areas. Seed not over $\frac{3}{8}$ inch deep, on a firm seedbed. It is recommended all plantings be made on a Pure Live Seed (PLS) basis.

$$\frac{\% \text{ Purity} \times \% \text{ Germination}}{100} = \text{PLS}\%$$

Suggested Seeding Rates

Row spacing, inches	PLS/ lineal foot	Total seed, lb/acre at 80% PLS
6	20	4*
24-36†	20-30	1

*Double this rate for broadcast seeding

†For seed production

On critical erosion sites Covar may be seeded in a mixture with slender wheatgrass or crested wheatgrass to provide a quicker ground cover.

Seed Availability

Foundation seed of Covar is available through the Washington State Crop Improvement Association. Washington seed growers who can meet the isolation requirements for the production of registered seed, should apply for foundation seed through their County Crop Improvement Association. Breeder seed is maintained by the Pullman Plant Materials Center.



Issued by Washington State University Cooperative Extension, J. O. Young, Director, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in furtherance of the Acts of **May 8** and June 30, 1914. Extension programs are available to all persons without discrimination. Published December 1981.
