



# CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM PLANT GUIDE

## INDIAN RICEGRASS

**Cultivars:** Nezpar, Rimrock, Paloma

**Seed Size:** 235,000 seeds/pound

**Form:** Bunchgrass, 14-24" tall,  
Open-panicle seedhead

**Area of Adaptation:** Indian ricegrass is adapted to areas of the Inland Pacific Northwest and that receive between 6 and 16 inches of annual precipitation. Indian ricegrass is a long-lived native bunchgrass and occurs predominately on sandy soils. It tolerates heat and drought extremely well. 'Nezpar' and 'Paloma' originate from native stands near Whitebird, Idaho and Pueblo, Colorado, respectively. 'Rimrock' originates from a stand near Billings, Montana, and it was selected for its low seed-shatter characteristic.

**Seeding:** Indian ricegrass seed generally exhibits a high degree of dormancy. Seed must either be scarified or stored for at least one year before seeding. It is generally seeded far deeper than most grasses. Most seeding guides suggest that it be seeded 2" deep. Deep seeding places the seed in moist soil and helps break seed dormancy. Seeding in the fall is preferred over spring seeding.

Indian ricegrass seed flows through drills without many problems. Indian ricegrass seed is small, roundish, and smooth, and it may settle out when mixed with wheatgrass seed. Periodically stirring the contents of the seedbox with a hoe or similar tool will prevent settling out problems.

Broadcast seeding should only be considered for fields that are unpacked and loose. Harrowing after seeding can place some seed at the proper depth but will leave a large percentage of seed too shallow.

**Management & Uses:** Indian ricegrass is an important native cool-season grass that occurs naturally on sandy soils. It is not uncommon to find it as the only plant growing on wind-swept sandy soils. Indian ricegrass is a preferred early season forage for most classes of livestock and wild ungulates. It is subject to overgrazing. Doves and other wild birds readily consume the highly nutritious seed. The seedheads are very showy and Indian ricegrass is sometimes added to roadside revegetation mixes as a beautification plant.

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