



Garden Talk

Grass Seed Mixes that Reduce Wildfire Risk

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During much of the year, grasses ignite easily and burn rapidly. Tall grass will quickly carry fire to your house. Plant “FireWise” grasses in the defensible space around your home and help defend it. Defensible space is an area around a structure where fuels and vegetation are treated or cleared to keep a wildfire low and moving slow. The right grass mix keep the landscape cool, landscape plant healthier and moist and burn cooler if fire over take the landscape.



covers the seed bed protect young seedlings from drying out, increased germination rate and reduces bird damage. This is especially important for seed sown on slopes prone to erosion. Watters Premium Mulch has been screened fine enough to make an excellent seed cover. Water the newly seeded areas frequently and lightly. Water enough to keep the soil moist but not so heavily as to cause soil washing and loss of the grass seed.

Seed Mixes for the Mountains of Arizona - Grass seed mixes developed for the mountains use native varieties or a combination of native and non-native grass species. While the basic mixes work well on all sites, they were modified for moist sites or northern exposures.

Grasses included in these mixes have the following characteristics: They are lower growing. Require less maintenance. Seed is readily available and relatively inexpensive. Grass seed mixes made up entirely of native seed may take longer to establish, up to three years, than those with a percentage of non-native ornamental seed blended in.

Maintenance – As seed dries and goes dormant in winter mow or weed whack spent grass to keep possible wildfire fuels low. Fertilizer with Watters “All Purpose Plant Food” 7-4-4 in March to encourage new spring growth and promote proper plant health. Here are the blends that reduce wildfire risk:

| All Native blend | Mixed pounds per acre |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Arizona fescue | 2 |
| Western wheatgrass | 5 |
| Streambank wheatgrass | 5 |
| Indian ricegrass | 5 |
| Blue grama | 2 |
| TOTALS | 19# lbs per acre |

| Native & Hardy Ornament Blend | Mixed pounds per acre |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bluegrass | 2 |
| Western wheatgrass | 5 |
| Streambank wheatgrass | 5 |
| Indian ricegrass | 4 |
| Sheep fescue | 2 |
| Blue grama | 2 |
| TOTALS | 20# lbs per acre |

Variation of these grasses can be blended at differing rates as desired. Ideal seasons to sow seed are in spring March through April. Again in fall from September through October, or anytime a monsoonal rainy pattern is favored. Low growing wildflowers are often added to the mix to increase interest for a meadow style look.

Planting – For mountain soils where the ground is rough or rocky, a hand held cyclone spreader will be easier to use. Rake seed into the soil after sowing to reduce the chances of it blowing or washing away. Composted mulch that lightly



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