

Ryegrass, Perennial

Lolium perenne



Description

Shiny, dark green, short-lived, perennial bunchgrass with smooth leaves. Grows 2 to 4 feet tall in seed head stage. Underside of leaves is glossy. Forage types have broad, coarse leaves. Turf types are lower growing and have narrower, finer-bladed leaves that resemble bluegrass.

Uses

Pasture, hay, and erosion control.

Advantages

High nutritive quality and palatability, excellent seedling vigor, high yields.

Disadvantages

Short stand life (two to three years). Stands are damaged by high temperatures and drought.

Seeding

Rate: 15-25 lb/a

Depth: ¼-½ in

Primary Date: Aug 15-Oct 1

Secondary Date: Feb 1-Apr 15

Harvest

First harvest: Apr 20-May 15

Annual yield: 2-4 tons dry matter/a



Perennial ryegrass leaves vary from narrow and fine (like bluegrass) to broad and coarse like tall fescue. In all cases, leaves have a very waxy or shiny appearance. Perennial ryegrass has a distinct purpling at the base of the stem.

Perennial ryegrass leaves are flattened in the bud, in contrast to annual ryegrass leaves, which come out rolled. By comparison, annual ryegrass heads typically have more florets per flower and usually have awns (fine hairs extending from the ends of each seed), while perennial ryegrass has fewer florets and doesn't have awns.