



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Materials Program

'Luna'

pubescent wheatgrass

Agropyron trichophorum (Link) Richter

A Conservation Plant Release by USDA NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Center



'Luna' Pubescent Wheatgrass

'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass (*Agropyron trichophorum*) was released in 1963 by the NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Center in cooperation with the New Mexico State University Agricultural Experiment Station in Los Lunas.

This cool-season perennial grass has the following qualities:

- Excellent forage production
- Vigorous seedling development
- Most drought resistant of the taller growing wheatgrasses
- Long-lived, rhizomatous

Description

'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass is a cool-season, perennial, long-lived, rhizomatous grass similar to intermediate wheatgrass in appearance except having varying degrees of pubescence throughout the plant. Some seed heads appear glabrous, but all basal leaf blades are hairy. It is less pubescent than other strains tested. The leaves are wide, lax, and dark green. Plants stem height averages 48 inches, and leaf height averages 30 inches.

'Luna' is considerably superior in leafiness and herbage production compared to the average of other tested accessions. Under irrigation, herbage production averaged 7,190 lbs. per acre, air-dried. This amount was determined by taking one clipping per year at a stubble height of 6 inches from the seed production block; two years of data.

Source

Collected in 1934 by the Westover-Enlow expedition to the former USSR and Turkey. Introduced as *Agropyron popovii* Drobov, PI 106831. Identified by J.R. Swallen as *A. trichophorum* (Link) Richter, now *E. intermedia* (Host) Nevski. It was received at the former Albuquerque Soil Conservation Service Nursery under the number P.I. 106831 via Turkestan. Carried and tested as A-1115-R₂-B.

Conservation Uses

'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass produces an abundance of dark green palatable forage. It produces more forage than other wheatgrass strains. It is a good pasture grass.

Area of Adaptation and Use

'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass is an excellent dry-land pasture grass on the deeper soils of the upper big-sagebrush area and the scrub oak zone. It also produced more forage and seed than other strains and species on shallow, infertile soils at these elevations. The new variety needs an area where an effective portion of the annual precipitation occurs as accumulated snow. Being taller and producing more forage than crested wheatgrass, 'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass requires a little more moisture, but it persists and grows on less than does intermediate wheatgrass. The new variety becomes dormant during periods of summer drought and then greens up again when the rains arrive.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass has excellent seedling vigor that results in fast establishment which is an outstanding characteristic of this variety. Field tests show 'Luna' to be superior in seedling vigor to other tested accessions.

Ecological Considerations

'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass is virtually free of diseases. It may be infested in the spring with a light population of red spider mites that can be effectively controlled by dusting with sulfur.

Seed and Plant Production

Seed yields of 'Luna' pubescent wheatgrass are higher than other wheatgrass strains. A seeding in the fall produces a good seed crop the following summer. For seed production, this variety requires irrigation except in areas that receive at least 18-inches of precipitation with a large share of that moisture falling in the winter.

Plant in rows for ease of cultivation and irrigation. Spacing can be from 32 inches to 42 inches apart to accommodate conventional equipment. Seed at a rate of 5 to 7 pounds of pure live seed. Plant shallow, no deeper than ¾ inch, and irrigate up.

The best time to seed in irrigated districts is the late summer or early fall.

Apply nitrogen fertilizer on established stands, typically with the first irrigation in early spring, and at rates of 80 to 120 of available nitrogen per acre, depending on inherent fertility of soil.

This variety, like other wheatgrasses, is cross-pollinated and must have adequate isolation in the production of certified

Availability

For seed or plant increase: Foundation seed of ‘Luna’ pubescent wheatgrass is available from the Upper Colorado Environmental Center in Meeker, Colorado.

For more information, contact:
Upper Colorado Environmental Center
5538 RBC #4
Meeker, CO 81641
Phone: 970-878-5003
Fax: 970-878-5004
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/copmc>

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