# fine fescue defined

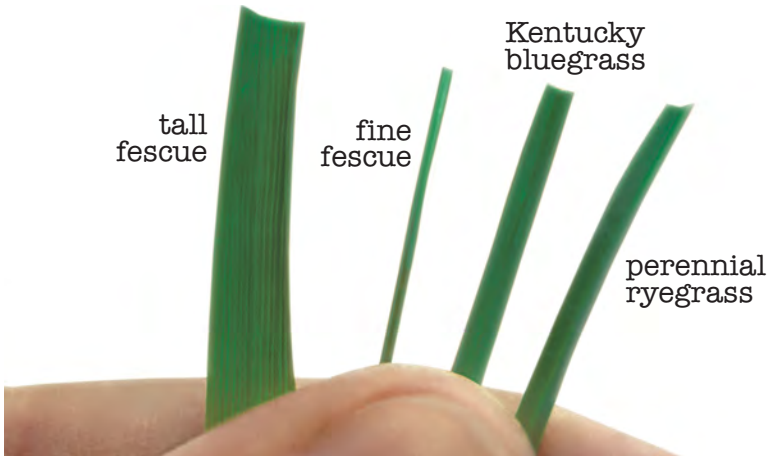
THE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TURFGRASS
FOR HOME LAWNS, PARKS AND GOLF COURSES

# fine fescues mix well

**FINE FESCUES MIX WELL** with other species of cool-season grasses. Where adapted, fine fescue seed is often mixed 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 by weight with Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass for home lawns and parks. Kentucky bluegrass adds cold tolerance and a luxurious luster to a lawn, and perennial ryegrass brings quick establishment, dark green color and wear tolerance to the mix. Modern links-type golf courses will mix colonial bentgrass with fine fescue for bio-diversity and soil stabilization on tees, fairways and greens.

Fine fescue seed is medium in size with about 400,000 seeds per pound. Germination is rapid (five to twelve days), and seedlings establish quickly. When a lawn seed mixture contains about 33⅓ percent fine fescue, 33⅓ percent perennial ryegrass and 33⅓ percent Kentucky bluegrass by weight, the turf will have the qualities of rapid establishment, wear and cold tolerance as well as shade and drought tolerance.

Colonial bentgrasses also mix well with fine fescues to make the finest close-mowed lawns possible. Since colonial bentgrass has about six million seeds per pound, 10 to 15 percent bentgrass and 85 to 90 percent fine fescue will provide close to two bentgrass plants for every fine fescue plant in a turf. This is about right for achieving the desirable bentgrass texture and still retaining the hardiness and ease of maintenance associated with fine fescues.




**Recommended seeding rates**

*for 100% fine fescue turf*

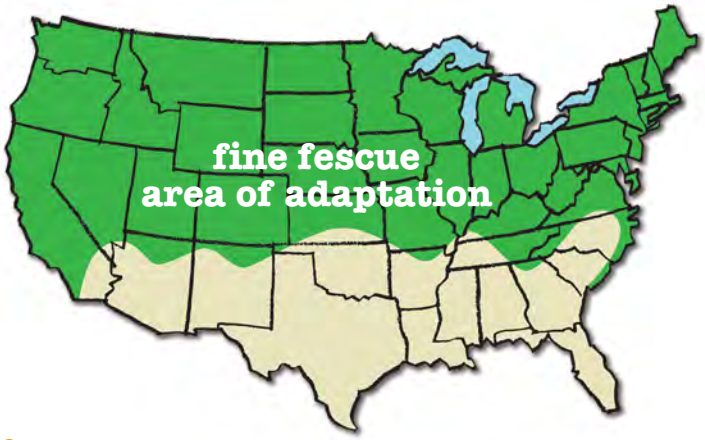
Home lawns . . . . . .8 to 10 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.
Parks . . . . . .250 lbs. per acre
Highways and median strips . . . . . .100 lbs. per acre
Resorts, campgrounds, campus . . . . . .250 lbs. per acre
Golf course fairways . . . . . .300 to 400 lbs. per acre
Golf greens (winter overseeding) . . . .10 lbs. fine fescue (mixed with 30 lbs. perennial rye) per 1,000 sq. ft.
Golf course roughs . . . . . .175 lbs. per acre.


**3-way mixture**

1/3 fine fescue,
1/3 perennial ryegrass,
1/3 Kentucky bluegrass (by weight)
Home lawns, parks . . . . . .6 to 8 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.

**Fine fescue characteristics**

| Characteristic | Chewings | creeping red |
|---|---|---|
| Growth habit | bunch type | tillers |
| Establishment rate | medium | medium |
| Nitrogen requirement | low to med | medium |
| Drought tolerance | good | good |
| Mow at 1/2 inch or less | yes | no |
| Shade adaptation | very good | very good |
| Cold tolerance | very good | very good |




# fine fescue covers lots of ground

**FINE FESCUES ARE AT HOME** from the transition zone northward, and at higher altitudes further south, as well as maritime microclimates. When fine fescues are mixed together, their range of adaptation is further increased.

Fine fescues are included in seed mixtures for parks, home lawns and golf courses. Professional turf managers and knowledgeable homeowners realize the water, fertilizer and manpower savings our Oregon grown improved varieties naturally provide.

Many sod producing farms grow 100 percent fine fescue turf specifically for low maintenance expanses such as banks, berms, slopes and hard-to-mow areas.

# fine fescue defined

**WHAT ARE FINE FESCUES** and why are they so important to homeowners, professional turfgrass managers and the lawn and landscape industry as a whole?

The easy answer is that environmentally friendly fine fescues help establish and maintain healthy, attractive lawns and turf areas all alone, or in mixtures with other cool-season turfgrass species. Oregon grown fine fescues lead the way in fescue breeding advancements and quality seed production. No wonder premium grass seed blends and mixtures include fine fescue seeds grown in Oregon.

Our fine fescue turfgrasses are included in most every park, golf course, industrial campus, condominium commons and home lawn from the Transition Zone, northward (see map).

We feel that fine fescues are the best investment a homeowner, superintendent or grounds manager can make. Here's why.

**Fine Fescues in Detail:**

- **Creeping red fescue** — *Festuca rubra L. subsp. trichophylla Gaud.*
- **Chewings fescue** — *Festuca rubra L. subsp. commutata Gaud.*

Generalized descriptions of fine fescues include the following:

- Most adaptable and versatile
- Thrives on sandy soil
- Tolerant of dry, infertile and acidic soil
- Withstands northern cold as well as heat of the upper south
- Grows well in sun or shade
- Can be mowed at various heights down to 1/4 inch for putting greens
- A true low maintenance lawn grass with minimal fertilizer and pesticide requirements
- Requires less water than than more succulent types of turfgrasses, and the slender leaves fold into a tight "V" shape in bright sunlight to retain moisture
- Fine fescues persist well around trees and don't need as much sunlight, water and nutrients as other species
- Vigorous seed that germinates and establishes quickly

These are a few of the many traits that help make fine fescues valuable cooperative components of an ecologically well balanced lawn.

Fine fescues possess growth traits that make them easy to get along when with compared to other grasses that make up a premium turf stand. Fine fescue helps lawn seed mixtures *work*. Here is how they accomplish this:


**A state-of-the-art combine collects seed from a swathed fine fescue field**

## Foliar Traits

Fine fescues have very narrow leaf blades that interact well with other grass species with wider, coarser leaves. The narrow leaves effectively stand between and separate disease susceptible grasses and perform as a buffer between them to inhibit disease transmission. In doing this, they do not encroach on the space other lawn grasses need for healthy, vigorous growth.

Unique fine fescue leaves fold into a tight "V" in bright sun to minimize moisture evaporation.

## Shade

Fine fescues and turf-type tall fescue are still the most shade tolerant of all cool-season grasses. Shady lawns may be seeded with fine fescue or turf-type tall fescue as a single species, or with mixtures of fine fescues and other shade tolerant species. Most lawns are combinations of sun and shade, so when a seed mixture of Kentucky bluegrass and fine fescue is used to establish a lawn, the bluegrass will be dominant in full sun, a combination of bluegrass and fine fescue will be found at the interface of sun and shade, and the fine fescue will be dominant in full shade. Introducing perennial ryegrass to the mixture adds wear tolerance and rapid establishment to the turf area.

Shade reduces high summer temperatures and increases the persistence of cool season grasses.

## Mowing Heights

Fine Fescues tolerate various cutting heights. Fine fescues are often mowed at 1/4 inch on putting greens, 5/8 inch on golf course fairways, 2½ to 3 inches in short roughs, or left to grow to its mature height for the extremely low maintenance "dunes look" popular on today's golf courses. In a home lawn or park turf, fine fescues are typically mowed at a height that favors the other species, usually 2½ inches or more.

Since height of cut is directly related to root growth, i.e., the more foliage left above ground, the more root development below ground; lawns are healthier and easier to maintain when clipped frequently at heights above one inch. Clipping causes grass plants to tiller, or increase in numbers to leaf-bearing shoots. At the proper height of cut, individual plants form the optimum number of leaves for a dense ground cover. This characteristic helps crowd out weed seedlings and prevents weed encroachment. Fine fescues are compatible with other lawn grasses regardless of mowing height — 1/4 inch low or 2½ inches high.

## Disease and Insect Resistance

Ongoing turfgrass research has yielded vast improvements in natural disease and insect resistance. Inclusion of fungal endophyte in leaf tissue has helped curb aboveground feeding insect damage. All fine fescues have degrees of resistance, depending on many interrelated growth and climatic characteristics. Generally, single species lawns are more prone to injury from diseases and insects than mixtures featuring two or more grass types in the lawn. This is the result of physical separation of grass types with similar susceptibility to infection or infestation. When grasses with varying degrees of susceptibility are spaced throughout a lawn, the probability of a sweeping disease or insect attack is reduced.

## Soil Conditions

Fine fescues thrive on sandy, well-drained soils. In this situation they respond to irrigation when needed, but are also persistent under drought conditions. Since companion bluegrass, ryegrass and bentgrass perform best when irrigated, fine fescues will become less dominant in these lawns. The fine fescues are not eliminated, but persist in a standby status until such time as inadequate rainfall or irrigation weakens or thins back the stand. At that time, the fine fescues fill back in to maintain a desirable turf density.

## Fertilization

Fine fescues require only small amounts of a balanced nutrient diet in the soil. In this respect, they are the best low-maintenance grasses for the cool, humid northern region of the country. When used with bluegrass, ryegrass and bentgrass that have much higher fertilization requirements, fine fescues may be restricted in development as other grasses become more dominant. Fine fescue persists in the lawn in a passive state until such time as the nutrient level of the soil is reduced, often between applications of lawn fertilizer. At these times they will resume a more active status in the turfgrass community.

## Soil Acidity

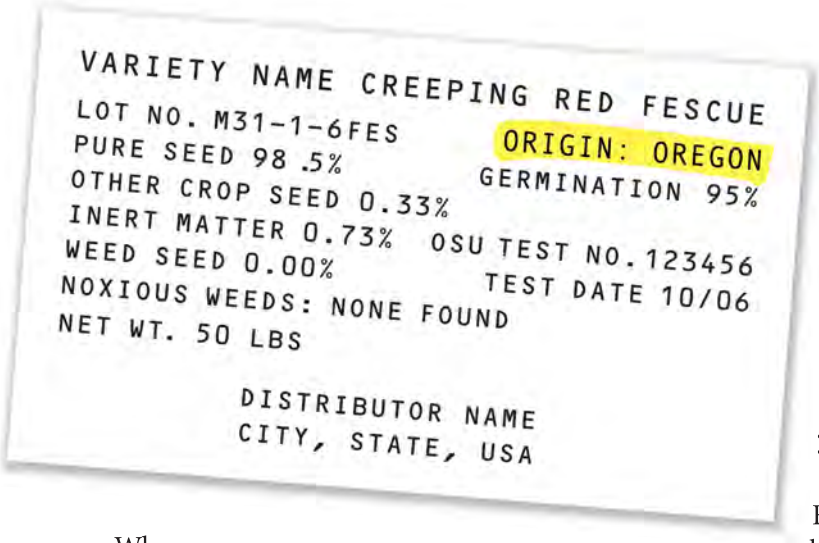
Fine fescues are moderate in their soil acidity requirements. They do well where the pH is slightly acid (5.5 to 6.5) which is similar to perennial ryegrass and between Kentucky bluegrass and colonial bentgrass. Therefore, fine fescues make excellent companions for the other cool season turfgrasses.

## Lawn Renovation and Overseeding

Fine fescues are ideal for renovation and overseeding with their sufficiently rapid germination and rate of seedling establishment. At seeding rates of five to ten pounds per 1,000 square feet, fine fescue can be raked or mechanically cut into an existing poor, thin lawn to then grow and spread. Fine fescues will not crowd out weak or diseased grasses, but they will function as nurse grasses by providing protection during heat and/or drought. In southern regions, where bermudagrass goes dormant after the first frost and stays brown through late spring, overseeding with fine fescue at about twenty pounds of seed per 1,000 square feet makes an ideal wintergreen lawn. Seed scratched into the soil on which dormant bermudagrass is present will help prevent winter weeds from becoming established. An attractive green foliage develops above the close cut bermuda, persisting until spring growth of the bermudagrass resumes. The fine fescue fades away as the aggressive bermudagrass again becomes dominant. Under environmental stress — usually combinations of high temperature, too much or too little moisture, and excesses of plant nutrients; lawn grasses are likely to be unhealthy. Since fine fescues are generally tolerant of high temperature and too little moisture, only *too much* irrigation and fertilizer are causes for concern.

## Origin: Oregon Advantage

Because Oregon fine fescue seeds incorporate the latest genetic improvements in adaptability, pest and disease resistance that seed produced in other regions don't have, they are naturally of superior quality. By law, every seed bag, box or package must carry an analysis tag stating purity, percent germination, and origin of the seed.




When your fine fescue is *Origin: Oregon*, you are assured it is of the highest quality. Over 60 percent of the world's cool season grass seed is produced in Oregon because seed companies can depend on the consistent, top-notch quality delivered by professional seed growers.

## A Really Fine Deal

Fine fescues have always been fine-leafed and have changed little in appearance compared with other species — especially former pasture types. Instead, fine fescues keep changing on the inside, increasing adaptability, disease and pest resistance as well as adding value to your monostand or mixture at a very reasonable price.

All-around fine fescues are found not only in level turf areas, but are at home, as well, on low-maintenance banks, berms, golf course extreme roughs, roadsides, ski slopes and compacted and remote hilly spots that don't retain moisture. So, you'll not only see fescue at the focal point of fine turf, but around the perimeter and beyond — like an elegant frame for a beautiful turfgrass picture.

It pays dividends to include *Origin: Oregon* fine fescues in your landscaping plans.

**Pronghorn Club / Nicklaus Course / Bend, Oregon**

# Fine fescue is easy to manage, just like Ole, here.

— Marge Paulson

## Marge and Ole know what landscape professionals know.

With large shade trees and metered water, a low maintenance, 100 percent fine fescue lawn is just the thing for all around their humble home.

Or, when seeded with ryegrass and bluegrass at the rate of one-third each, fine fescues bring their outstanding shade tolerance, drought resistance, and low nitrogen utilization benefits to the mix.

And when they see *Origin: Oregon* on the seed analysis tag, they know it's the best investment they can make in their lawn.

ORIGIN: OREGON

OREGON GROWN FINE FESCUE

**Oregon Fine Fescue Commission**
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