

O R E G O N G R O W N

HINNE

Fescue

THE DUNES GRASS

FINE FESCUE / the “comeback” turfgrass that’s been here all the time

On the cover : Fine fescue produces a low maintenance ground cover around the award-winning landscape at Pepperdine University, Malibu, California.

Below : Creeping red fescue-covered banks line both sides of a mile-long section of Tierra Rejada Road, Moorpark, California.

Fine fescue is a widely adapted cool-season turfgrass that’s used in home lawns, parkways, and on low-maintenance slopes where water and manpower are a premium.

The unmowed fine fescue “dunes look” has long been a part of golf course design, and is becoming more and more popular in landscape design outside the links.

Along with the northern sweep of states where fine fescue thrives, the maritime climate of the southern California coast is ideal for fine fescue establishment. Coastal sod-producing farms provide fine fescue turf for golf courses, banks, berms, and ornamental areas around trees, signage, and flower arrangements.

In the town of Moorpark, California, both sides of a one-mile section of Tierra Rejada Road is planted with eight to ten acres of creeping red fescue which is cut once every three years with string trimmers.

At Pepperdine University, along the Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu, a mixture of 1/3 Chewings, 1/3 creeping red, and 1/3 hard fescue covers six acres of banks along roadways, surrounding the athletic field complex, and around campus buildings.

Rick Leach, Pepperdine’s Director of Campus Services, Facilities Management and Planning, says this very low maintenance ground cover requires fertilizing once a year, and string trimming only when necessary.

“When fescue is allowed to form a dense canopy, few seedheads emerge, and weeds don’t get a chance to germinate,” Rick says. “When we *do* find weeds or competing grasses, they are easily controlled with FUSILADE II® and broadleaf weed sprays.

“It’s beautiful to look at, but perhaps the real beauty of fine fescues is in its very low maintenance characteristics. Fescue’s easy on the eyes — and the maintenance budget.”



Photography © Larry Kazzell

Chewings and creeping red fescues are similar in appearance, but Chewings is a bunch-type grass while creeping red fescue forms tillers useful in soil stabilization. These two fescues may be mixed together, and with hard fescue, for an all fine-fescue stand often found in golf course roughs and shady park areas.

Chewings and creeping red fescues also mix well with improved turf-type perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass. When mixed in equal amounts by weight, beautiful turf results with the combined qualities of each specie : the quick establishment and wear tolerance of ryegrass, cold tolerance, sod strength, and rich color of Kentucky bluegrass, as well as the drought and shade tolerance of fine fescue.

All turfgrass seed bags and packages have an attached analysis tag that will indicate the percentage of the species included.



Left : An attractive, low maintenance fine fescue planting complements the surrounding landscape features at Pepperdine, as well as provide low-maintenance ground-cover for the roadside bank beyond.

Below : Fine fescues mixed in equal parts with with Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass add shade tolerance to attractive lawns.



FINE FESCUE / adds texture to the Pronghorn Nicklaus and Fazio Courses



Above : Director of Superintendents at Pronghorn Club, John Anderson, in front of Hole No. 1, Fazio Course.

Below : Jennifer Fischer, Assistant Superintendent at the Pronghorn Fazio Course, discusses germination of hydroseeded fine

fescue around the par-3, No. 8 green with John Anderson. The course's unique lava tube is visible in the sheer rock wall.

John Anderson has been superintendent on some of the nation's finest courses but still is in awe of what Mother Nature has provided to work with on the courses at Pronghorn Club, near Bend, Oregon.

The first of two courses completed at this remote, exclusive high desert location was the 18-hole Jack Nicklaus design. Opened in June 2005, the course consists of an oasis of creeping bentgrass tees, greens, and fairways; Kentucky bluegrass roughs, with contrasting fine fescue around bunkers and extreme roughs — all within the distinctive native sagebrush and juniper surrounds.

The second course, designed by Tom Fazio, is scheduled to open in Fall 2006. During the early construction phase of the former volcanic area, a 5,000-year-old lava tube was discovered on the par-3, No. 8 hole. The tunnel is now incorporated into the design.

"The Fazio Course is the only course with a lava tube as a hazard," grins John Anderson. "It further indicates what a special site this is."



"Both the Nicklaus and Fazio courses make excellent use of the unique look fine fescue brings to the design," John says. "While the bentgrass and bluegrass remain consistent throughout the year, the fescue takes on different appearances through the seasons."

The fine fescues remain green through the spring, then produce seedheads in mid-May. In early August the mature fescue seedheads turn golden-brown and wave in the breeze, contrasting with the verdant playing areas.

"We keep the fescue areas lean so they are a playable lie," John says. "Fescues outlining the bunkers help define the hazards, yet the seedheads are sparse enough to not hinder a shot from the sand. With virtually no maintenance from spring through fall when we string trim the seedheads, we realize a manpower savings in this typically high maintenance area of a golf course."

Establishing fine fescue at Pronghorn is accomplished by hydroseeding 65 lbs. of seed mix per tank, covering 8,000 sq. ft.

The mixture consists of Chewings fescue, creeping red fescue, sheeps fescue, hard fescue and 8 percent Kentucky bluegrass.

"When the temperature is 85 to 90 degrees, fescue germinates in five to seven days," John says. "We fertilize with 1/2 lb. nitrogen, 1 lb. phosphorous, and 2/10 lb. potash to establish the seedlings. To encourage tillering, we mow the newly established turf twice before allowing the fescue to grow to its mature height. In subsequent years, we'll cut the fescue twice in the spring."

"The 8th hole on the Fazio Course will require somewhat different maintenance procedures. The rocks reflect as well as absorb heat, creating its own special environment."

"These courses are special in every way. I feel privileged to be part of the grow-in and maintenance of these gorgeous golf facilities."



With 360,000 to 400,000 seeds per pound, fine fescue is an economical choice before – and after – seeding your course.

Fine fescue defines bunker and deep rough areas around the Nicklaus Course.

**John Anderson,
Director of
Superintendents,
David Freitag,
Superintendent.**



FINE FESCUE / produced by growers who care as much as you about quality

Below : Swathing mature fine fescue fields into windrows occurs in late June, seven to ten days prior to combines collecting the seed for cleaning and bagging.

Cleaned seed is sampled and sent to an approved seed laboratory for testing.

Fine Fescue Characteristics

compared with other cool-season grasses

Characteristics	Chewings	Creeping
Growth habit	Bunch type	Tillers
Establishment rate . . .	Medium	Medium
Nitrogen requirement . .	Low to Med.	Medium
Drought tolerance . . .	Good	Good
Mow at 1/2 in. or less .Yes	. . . . .	No
Shade adaptation . . .	Very good	Very good
Cold tolerance	Very good	Very good
Seeds per pound . . .	.360,000	.400,000

Recommended Seeding Rates

for 100% fine fescue turf

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

for fine fescue/per. rye/Ky. blue mixture

1/3 fine fescue, 1/3 perennial ryegrass, 1/3 Kentucky bluegrass (by weight)	
Home lawns . . . . .	.5 lbs./1000 sq. ft.
Parks, sod production200 lbs./acre

fertilization rate

Actual N per year	1-1.5 lbs.
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Oregon is the grass seed capital of the world, with a half-million acres of cool-season grasses in production. Much of Oregon's Chewings and creeping red fescue seed is grown on un-irrigated hillsides in the Willamette Valley where spring rains provide adequate moisture, or in Eastern Oregon where irrigation is applied only when needed.

This attests to the hardy drought tolerance of the fine fescues — and translates to a resource-saving feature in home lawns, landscaping applications, golf course, and highway median and parkway use.

In many cases, with its low annual fertilization requirement, fine fescue needs mowing only once or twice a year. It's a natural choice where an attractive, low-maintenance ground cover is appropriate.

Fine fescue is a perennial crop produced primarily by full-time Oregon farming families with years of education and generations of experience.

New fields are fall planted to produce seed the following year. Production fields are fertilized in the spring, and produce seedheads in May. Fields are sprayed for weeds, and hand-rogued or spot-sprayed for off-type plants before mature seedheads are swathed into windrows in late June. Fields to be certified have been twice inspected by Oregon State University Extension Agents for varietal





purity. Combines collect windrowed seed seven to ten days later, then trucks carry it off to cleaners where everything that is not fine fescue is removed. Samples of processed seed are sent to an approved lab where tests for purity, germination, weed seed, other crop seed and inert matter are performed.

The contents are printed on a tag attached to every seed bag or package sold, along with the place of origin, seed lab's test number and grower's lot number indicating the field and crop year.

Insisting on *Origin*: Oregon grown seed is your assurance of a quality product grown by full-time professionals who care as much as you about results.

Above, left: Many Oregon grass seed farms have been operating more than 100 years, and are run by multi-generations like Creston and Dovey Shaw with grandson Brett Rudd of La Grande.

Above: A fine fescue "circle" in La Grande is irrigated as the crop approaches maturity.

Below, left: Each seed bag or package carries an analysis tag stating origin, purity, germination, and grower lot number.

Below: Modern, efficient combines are a large investment, but harvest seed from swathed windrows quickly with minimal loss.

