

Scott's Seedings

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Forage Grass Alternatives

By now the planning should have started on which fields should be turned under and planted or which ones can be inter-seeded. This year will be like last year and present some challenges due to seed availability. Last year some grasses did not fare well for seed production - there were complete crop failures to very small yields. Again, we need to look outside the box for alternatives to what we have used in the past.

Reeds Canarygrass is essentially not available, and what little is available is very expensive. Reeds Canarygrass is a great species for wet areas that makes exceptional yields and is good for grazing. It takes time to establish, but once it does, it is very aggressive and will take over a stand over a period of time. **An alternative to Reeds Canarygrass is PREVAL MEADOW FESCUE, a semi-aggressive grass that tolerates wet conditions, dries down quicker than Reeds Canarygrass, and will not take over a mixed stand.** ● **PREVAL** is a great “new” grass to use in the northern USA. ● Works well in MIG (managed intensive grazing) situations and is a good choice for hay production where “winter kill” is an issue. ● **PREVAL** was developed from ecotypes from Switzerland and France, combining good forage yield with improved resistance to diseases. ● Exhibits good winter hardiness and summer production and will produce long, wide leaves making it an excellent choice for haying or pasture. ● Can be used in forage blends to improve summer productivity for grazing or hay production. ● Like most meadow fescue, **PREVAL** has an early spring growth, with a regrowth consisting mainly of leafy shoots. ● Suitable for both cutting and grazing.

Smooth Brome grass is also very limited in supply due to a poor seed yield last year. Though there is some Smooth Brome grass available in VNS, Peak and York, I would suggest that you try to cover your needs as soon as possible. **When you order, you may be looking for an alternative to smooth brome grass; I would encourage you to again look outside the box at MacBeth, Fleet, or Paddock MEADOW BROMEGRASS.** ● Long-lived, rapid developing, leafy, introduced cool season grass that spreads by short rhizomes. ● Awns, hairy leaves and stems, and lack of aggressive rhizomes can distinguish meadow brome from smooth brome. ● Primary use is forage production for pasture, hay and haylage and is highly palatable to all classes of livestock and wildlife. ● One of the best forage grasses for use in Northern states under intensive rotational grazing systems and can also be used for wildlife food plots and erosion control. ● One of the earliest species to initiate growth in the spring and makes tremendous growth during cool conditions. ● Due to deep roots and tiller base, it is capable of strong summer growth and regrowth following grazing or haying. ● Rapid recovery following mowing or grazing even during the hot periods of the year. ● Very winter hardy and produces well in areas with spring frost. ● Establishes roots very slowly and plants may be severely damaged by grazing too soon. ● Plants may be severely damaged or pulled out by overgrazing, especially in the seedling year, due to poorly rooted seedlings. ● Harvesting for hay during the establishment year will be most beneficial to eliminate grazing damage. ● Do not graze in the spring until forage is 8-12 inches high and remove animals from pasture when 3-4 inch stubble height remains. ● 3-4 week rest period between grazing is recommended. ● Responds well to rotational grazing systems.

Another option is Success HYBRID BROMEGRASS. ● Selected from crossing meadow brome grass with smooth brome grass to achieve uniformity in plant type, good seed production, regrowth, reduced creeping tendency, vigor and great late fall regrowth. ● **Success** looks more like a smooth brome grass, but has excellent yield and better regrowth than meadow brome grass. ● Excellent persistence, winter hardiness, tolerates acidic soils, and is not as invasive as smooth brome grass. ● Improved forage quality and is a great companion to alfalfa.



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