

Fact Sheet

'PAIUTE' ORCHARDGRASS

Species: *Dactylis glomerata*
 Common Name: Orchardgrass
 Plant Symbol: DAGL
 Accession Number: PI-109072

Source: Paiute was introduced into the United States in 1934 from Ankara, Turkey. It was tested by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Arizona and New Mexico and by the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Universities in Arizona, Utah and Idaho. Detailed collection site information is not available.

Native Site Information: Orchardgrass is native to Eurasia and Africa, but is now naturalized in temperate zones throughout the western hemisphere. The species was first introduced into the United States prior to 1760 as a pasture grass.

Method of Selection: Paiute was first tested by the NRCS in Arizona and New Mexico. It was subsequently evaluated by the Forest and Range Experiment Station and wildlife agencies in Utah, Idaho and Montana. Seed was then provided to the University of Arizona for further evaluation. It has been found to establish and persist at high elevations for up to 20 years under arid conditions in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Idaho.

Description: Paiute is a low-growing heat resistant strain of orchardgrass. Under arid conditions Paiute is a persistent bunchgrass with numerous basal leaves and leafy culms. Flowering stems grow to approximately 15 to 18 inches tall while leaves are usually less than 12 inches long. Under irrigation Paiute grows in close stands of more robust plants.



**'Paiute'
Orchardgrass**

Use:
cool

This

season, shade tolerant grass is well suited as a forage crop for arid pasturelands. It also has good potential for erosion control, fire breaks and critical area treatment. Paiute has been shown to be preferred by livestock, big game and rabbits over crested and intermediate wheatgrass. Additionally, it greens up 7 to 10 days earlier in the spring, remains green longer and has better fall regrowth. It does not; however, outperform crested or intermediate wheatgrass in areas receiving less than 16 inches of annual precipitation.

Insect and Disease Problems: No detrimental disease symptoms or insect problems have been observed in plantings of Paiute.

Environmental Considerations: Since Paiute is an introduced plant from Europe, it is not an appropriate component in native plant community restoration. This release is from a species that was introduced to the United States in the late 1800's. Paiute represents an incremental improvement in performance within a well documented species. Paiute spreads very little via natural seed distribution. It is not considered a weedy or invasive species but can spread into adjoining vegetative communities under ideal environmental conditions. There are no known negative impacts on wild or domestic animals.

Area of Adaptation: Paiute is well adapted to semi-arid conditions of the Intermountain West, especially in situations receiving at least 16 inches annual precipitation. It is best suited to the sagebrush-grass and piñon-juniper communities.

Soil Adaptation: Paiute does well in well-drained basic and acidic soils. It grows well in a range of soil textures and depths varying from clays to gravelly loams. It does not perform well in saline soils or under poorly drained soil conditions with high water tables.

Planting and Harvesting: Paiute should be seeded with a drill to a depth of ¼ to ½ inch in a firm, weed-free seedbed. The full seeding rate is 4 pounds Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre. When used as a component of a seed mix, adjust to the percent of mix desired.

For seed production Paiute should be seeded in 36 inch rows at a rate of 1.2 pounds PLS per acre to allow mechanical weed control and to maintain rows. Harvesting seed is best accomplished by swathing, followed by combining of the windrows. Seed is generally harvested in early to mid July. Seed yields average 300 pounds per acre (irrigated).

Seed Maintenance: Breeder and Foundation seed is maintained at:

USDA-NRCS, Aberdeen PMC
P.O. Box 296
1691A S. 2700 W.
Aberdeen, ID 83210
Phone: (208) 397-4133

Foundation seed is available through the University of Idaho Foundation Seed Program and Utah Crop Improvement Association and Soil Conservation Districts in Idaho, Utah and Nevada. Certification of seed shall be limited to not more than two generations from Foundation seed (Registered and Certified).

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