



SEED & SUPPLIES FOR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

FINE FESCUE MIXES: NATIVE

Native Fine Fescue Mix (70 lbs/acre)

Festuca rubra Molate, Molate Red Fescue
Festuca idahoensis, Native Idaho Fescue
Festuca occidentalis, Western Fescue

Timing: An ideal time to sow this mix would be upon the initiation of the cooler fall season in order to take advantage of winter rainfall. In many cases, annual winter weed growth presents the greatest competition to the establishment of an effective ornamental grass cover or alternative lawn using this or any other seed mix.

Installation: The installation of this mix ought to be approached with other than routine turf-type expectations; it requires a grow-in period that is longer than conventional turfgrass with longer attention paid to the control of invasive weeds. In any event, there are significant differences in management requirements for non-irrigated and lightly irrigated sites.

Irrigation: This mix is capable of surviving, after establishment, with only natural precipitation although the likeliest success assumes the availability of supplemental irrigation on site. The *summer dormancy* of the natives expresses itself as a browning off of the grass cover, greening up again with the natural rainfall and cooler weather of winter.

For *maximum* growth during the first summer, areas of a project planted to the Native Fine Fescue Mix would need almost as much water as the rest of the landscaped areas. Lower amounts of water would merely extend the period before complete cover is achieved. Water requirements usually go way down during and after the first winter. However, it may be beneficial to continue to provide water to the native mix through the spring and early summer of the second year in order to complete the grow-in before weaning the grasses off all supplemental water during the warm season. While the long-term irrigation goal may be to reduce or eliminate water use — with the native fescues allowed to turn a tawny brown in the dormant summer months — this goal may be feasible *only after the grasses have become established*.

In non-irrigated projects, the plants will of course be dependent on natural rainfall to establish and grow over the first and subsequent winters.