



SEED & SUPPLIES FOR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

## FINE FESCUE MIXES: NON-NATIVE

### **Non-Native Fine Fescue Mix (130 - 150 lbs/acre)**

50% Festuca longifolia “Firefly” Hard Fescue

50% Festuca ovina “Azay” Sheep Fescue

### **Grassy Fine Fescue Mix (130 – 150 lbs/acre)**

34% Chewings Fescue

33% Creeping Red Fescue

33% Hard Fescue

These two popular mixes can each produce a lush groundcover approximately one foot in height *if provided with sufficient water at the right times in their life cycles.*

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

**Installation:** The installation of these seed mixes ought to be approached with other than routine turf-type expectations; there are significant differences in management requirements for lightly irrigated and fully irrigated sites.

**Irrigation:** The *Non-Native* and *Grassy* mixes are designed to provide a relatively uniform stand of low to medium stature, *evergreen*, fine-textured grasses displaying constant foliar color variation from lighter, glaucous to darker greens. The maintenance of these mixes assumes the availability of supplemental irrigation on site. While the long-term irrigation goal may be to reduce the water use in either of these fine fescue landscapes, this goal is only feasible *after the grasses have become established.* For *maximum* growth during the first summer, areas of a project planted to either of these fine fescue mixes 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 the first winter.

**FERTILIZATION:** During the plant establishment phase of the first summer following the sowing of seed the previous fall, these fescues perform best with about one-half the pre-plant nutrition provided to traditional landscape areas. During the first winter, the only fertilizer application would be spot treatments in areas of weaker growth. Compared to turfgrass, these fine fescues are slower to emerge and significantly slower to put on significant top growth.



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**MAINTENANCE:** For ongoing maintenance, 1 lb/1,000sq.ft. of actual N in the spring and 1 lb. in the fall should support these grasses at an appropriate density. The ongoing site manager would benefit from a clear understanding of the low input nature of a landscape planted to fine fescues and the necessity of balancing fertilizer and irrigation applications in order to achieve the desired growth of healthy plants. Many clients may enjoy significant benefits from investigating the potential use of post-emergence herbicides based on the active ingredient sethoxydim and 2,4-D products in order to manage the grassy and broad-leaf weeds in these fine fescue plantings.

**WILDFLOWERS:** With proper spacing and grooming, a meadow-like appearance can be enhanced by including wildflowers. Seeds can be sown into the thinner areas of the fine fescue stands during the later phases of establishment of the desirable grasses. It should be noted that the challenges of controlling weeds are compounded by introducing wildflower seeds as part of the initial planting; identification of desirable wildflower seedlings as distinct from non-desirable weed seedlings may add an undesirable element to the eradication of weeds during the grow-in.