



Would you buy a watch that won't tell time?

That is the condition many unknowing cover crop buyers find themselves in when their investment in a Zorro Fescue cover crop did not reseed itself the following year

Zorro Annual Fescue (*Vulpia myuros* L) is an excellent cover crop with many advantages but its most important advantage is its early maturation. Early maturation means setting seed before the soil runs out of moisture or some early cash crop maintenance operation destroy the seed set. Get the wrong genetics in the seed and it may not have the ability to keep a good cover for 5 years (as it has averaged in past years)- **you wont get it back**

This problem is easily avoided - *buy Certified Seed*

Certification is a production protocol established by the breeder and administered by an independent State agency - in California it is the California Crop Improvement Association. It is a type of "pedigree" for plant genetics. When you purchase seeds that have been issued a Certified tag you're assured that the selected adaptations of the cultivar have been maintained in the seeds.

The Vulpia's generally set seed based on day length. This valuable trait makes them less dependent on temperature or soil moisture thus more dependable and able to leave moisture in the soil for the cash crop.

This trait makes it difficult to reliably produce a So. latitude selected cultivar from production seed in northern latitudes, as it will quickly lose its early maturity as well as pickup contaminants from wild Vulpia's. In order to earn a certification tag Zorro must have been grown from breeders seed or registered seed thus assuring the lasting qualities of the original.



(See other side for NRCS description)



Phone : 805/684-0436 • Fax: 805/684-2798 • www.ssseeds.com
P. O. Box 1275 • Carpinteria • California • USA • 93014-1275

'Zorro' Annual Fescue

(*Vulpia myuros* L)

... originally introduced into California during the Mission period. [The cultivar 'Zorro'] was released by the Natural Resource Conservation Service in cooperation with the Agricultural Experiment Station in early 1977. This species occurs throughout California below 5,500 feet, and in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Texas, and in several localities on the East Coast.

Description

'Zorro' is a short, aggressive, early maturing, cool-season annual grass with many fibrous roots. It has excellent seedling vigor, and emerges in fall very soon after the first rain. It matures seed earlier than most annual grasses, assuring perpetuation. It can tolerate soil problems of acidity, serpentine, and low fertility.

Adaptation

'Zorro' is a drought tolerant grass that will persist and provide good erosion control cover with an annual precipitation of at least 25cm (10 inches), or on areas receiving extra run-in moisture and on areas receiving some supplemental irrigation. It has persisted on sites up to 1365m (4,500 feet), and is suited to soils and mine spoils with a pH of 4.3 or higher. Its good seedling vigor and early growth make Zorro an excellent choice for obtaining fast cover with minimal seedbed preparation.

Uses

The excellent fibrous root system of 'Zorro' provides quick erosion control cover and soil stabilization to steep, shallow, infertile soils, and barren, disturbed slopes. As the site improves in condition, it will allow climax species to invade.

Its uses include road bank stabilization, wildfire burn and mine-spoil revegetation, orchard and vineyard cover crop, and problem soil control in the Mediterranean climate.

Establishment

The optimum time for seeding is between October 1 and November 15.

Loosening the soil surface before seeding and covering lightly produces the best stands. Seed can be hydroseeded, but best establishment occurs when the seed is in contact with the soil.

Recommended seeding rates on critical areas are:

- Broadcast, hydroseeded - 9 pounds per acre
- Drilled - 6 pounds per acre
- Depth should be 1 to 2 cm (0.5 to 1 inch).

Seed can be drilled or broadcast, but because of its size and shape, it tends to stick together. Rice hulls and/or a good companion seed will help prevent "bridging over," and allow proper dispersion of seed. There are about 993,700 seeds per pound.

Management

Applying 40 pounds of nitrogen per acre every other season during October or November will maintain healthy, erosion resistant stands. Annual fescues are initial invaders, so as sites improve, 'Zorro' will probably be replaced by taller, more enduring plants, unless the area is mowed or grazed. In cover crop planting, 'Zorro' can be mowed frequently, but should be allowed to mature seed for continued perpetuation. It is readily controlled by several herbicides, providing assurance that it will not become a troublesome weed.

Seed Availability

Foundation seed of "Zorro" is available through the California Crop Improvement Association and local Resource Conservation Districts. Certified seed is available through several commercial outlets in California.