
A Look Back



While you may be living in one of the regions of the country that received (and is STILL receiving) more than adequate supplies of winter moisture, others in the Upper Midwest have suffered through a very dry winter. In fact, it has been the driest winter (Dec-Feb) in more than 100 years in Michigan and the second driest in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Dry conditions have also inflicted the Central and Upper Plain states. It would seem likely that such dry conditions would eventually lead to the need to re-seed. We hope so!

CropTalk

The Pacific Northwest is currently receiving sufficient spring rains, after being blessed with adequate winter moisture. The mild, cool spring is slowly bringing crops back to life. In the Willamette Valley, farmers are fertilizing and spraying, and crops are responding. Up North, the creeping red fescue fields are still dormant, and covered with another blanket of recent snowfall. It may be full month before observations can be made on their behalf. As is true in years past, April is a "wait and see" month with not much more than speculation available as a forecast tool.



Characteristics

Have you ever wondered about orchardgrass? This amazing plant, originally from Western and Central Europe has been grown in the U.S. for at least two centuries. Now, there are nearly three dozen varieties produced in the States alone. Its wide adaptation and extensive root system allows orchardgrass to grow in diverse climates and survive climatic extremes, making it a popular choice for many hay producers and grazers alike. For instance, it is more tolerant of shade, heat and drought than perennial ryegrass, timothy, or Kentucky bluegrass. Additionally, orchardgrass is high yielding, can be used for hay or grazing, is very palatable and digestible, and can easily be planted with both legumes and other grasses.

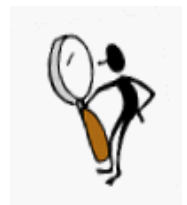


At Smith Seed, we supply many public varieties including **Hallmark**, **Latar**, **Paiute**, **Pennlate**, and **Potomac**. Additionally, we have our own impressive proprietary called **Takena**. It is later maturing and has performed very well in both forage and grazing trials.

How much orchardgrass seed is produced each year? Over the past five years, Oregon has produced an average of about 17-18 million lbs. each year, according to the Oregon Orchardgrass Seed Producers. Interestingly enough, since 1985, Oregon orchardgrass production has generally stayed between 15 and 21 million lbs per year. You can get more information on orchardgrass from the Oregon State's Forage Information System at <http://forages.orst.edu/is/ois/#>. Even more important, make sure you check with Smith Seed Services for your orchardgrass needs! ☺

MarketWatch

Prices continue to be stable with only nominal changes in a few markets. The one market that saw a price increase in March was Kentucky-31 tall fescue. This has led to a slight upward movement of turf-types and fawn. Otherwise, a slow-starting spring coupled with reduced inventories in some crops appears to be orchestrating a taunt, yet stable market. As far as spring movement is concerned, some parts of the country have claimed to be 3-weeks behind, while other regions are very pleased with their activity levels.



Did you know?



Smith Seed Services recently hired Ed Herb as a bag salesman for the Pacific Northwest. Ed comes to us with decades of experience in bag sales. Smith Seed Services continues to expand the service of providing customized bags and bag supplies to our seed customers, other agricultural suppliers, and farmers.