

Technical Bulletin

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Elbee Northern Wheatgrass

Elymus lanceolatus ssp. *Lanceolatus*

Description:

Elbee Northern Wheatgrass (commonly called thickspike wheatgrass in the US) is a very hardy, cool-season, long lived perennial sod forming grass with a moderately aggressive creeping root system. Elbee has excellent seedling vigour and is easy to establish and maintain under most conditions. Elbee is Canada's first certified native grass and was developed by Agriculture Canada Lethbridge from 49 native selections in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. From the 49 original selections the 8 top lines were selected for forage and seed yield and bulked to form Elbee.

Varietal Characteristics:

The leaves and stems are moderately fine and scabrous and are light grayish-green in colour. Depending on conditions the plants vary in height from 50-100cm (20-40") with erect leaves and stems. Elbee tolerates cold, drought and alkali conditions. There are approximately 330,000 seeds per kg or 150,000 seed per lb.

Performance:

In performance trials Elbee yielded less than Critana, (a common US variety) during its establishment year but more than Critana in the years after establishment. Average forage yield of Elbee was about 5% greater than Critana on average.

Adaptation:

Elbee is well adapted to reclamation, revegetation, forage or pasture use in the brown, dark brown and black soil zones of the prairies where ever Northern Wheatgrass is found.

Interesting Fact:

The name Elbee was selected in recognition of the contribution to rangeland research of Dr. L.B. Thomson, the first Superintendent of the Dominion Range Experiment Station, Manyberries, Alberta



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