

# STANDARD AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR PERMANENT CRITICAL AREA PLANTINGS



## Definition

Establishing grasses with other forbs and/or shrubs to provide perennial vegetative cover on disturbed, denuded, slopes subject to erosion.

## Purpose

To reduce erosion and sediment transport.

## Conditions Where Practice Applies

This practice applies to all disturbed areas void of, or having insufficient, cover to prevent erosion and sediment transport. See additional standards for special situations such as sand dunes and sand and gravel pits.

## Criteria

All water control measures will be installed as needed prior to final grading and seedbed preparation. Any severely compacted sections will require chiseling or disking to provide an adequate rooting zone, to a minimum depth of 12". The seedbed must be prepared to allow good soil to seed contact, with the soil not too soft and not too compact. Adequate soil moisture must be present to accomplish this. If surface is powder dry or sticky wet, postpone operations until moisture changes to a favorable condition. If seeding is accomplished within 24 hours of final grading, additional scarification is generally not needed, especially on ditch or stream banks. Remove all stones and other debris from the surface that are greater than 4 inches, or that will interfere with future mowing or maintenance.

Soil amendments should be incorporated into the upper 2 inches of soil when feasible. **The soil should be tested to determine the amounts of amendments needed.** Apply ground agricultural limestone to attain a pH of 6.0 in the upper 2 inches of soil. If soil must be fertilized before

results of a soil test can be obtained to determine fertilizer needs, apply commercial fertilizer at 600 lbs. per acre of 5-10-10 or equivalent. If manure is used, apply a quantity to meet the nutrients of the above fertilizer. This requires an appropriate manure analysis prior to applying to the site. Do not use manure on sites to be planted with birdsfoot trefoil or in the path of concentrated water flow.

Seed mixtures may vary depending on location within the state and time of seeding. Generally, warm season grasses should only be seeded during early spring, April to May. These grasses are primarily used for vegetating excessively drained sands and gravels. See Standard and Specification for Sand and Gravel Mine Reclamation. Other grasses may be seeded any time of the year when the soil is not frozen and is workable. When legumes such as birdsfoot trefoil are included, spring seedings are preferred. See Table 3.1 "Permanent Critical Area Planting Mixture Recommendations" for additional seed mixtures.

### General Seed Mix:

<sup>1</sup> add inoculant immediately prior to seeding

	<u>Variety</u>	<u>lbs./acre</u>	<u>lbs/1000 sq. ft.</u>
Birdsfoot trefoil <sup>1</sup> <u>OR</u>	Empire/Pardee	8 <sup>2</sup>	0.20
Common white clover <sup>1</sup>	Common	8	0.20
<u>PLUS</u>			
Tall fescue	KY-31/Rebel	20	0.45
<u>PLUS</u>			
Redtop <u>OR</u>	Common	2	0.05
Ryegrass (perennial)	Pennfine/Linn	5	0.10

<sup>2</sup> Mix 4 lbs each of Empire and Pardee OR 4 lbs of Birdsfoot and 4 lbs white clover per acre.

Time of Seeding: The optimum timing for the general seed mixture is early spring. Permanent seedings may be made any time of year if properly mulched and adequate moisture is provided. Late June through early August is not a good time to seed, but may facilitate covering the land without additional disturbance if construction is completed. Portions of the seeding may fail due to drought and heat. These areas may need reseeding in late summer/fall or the following spring.

Method of seeding: Broadcasting, drilling, cultipack type

seeding, or hydroseeding are acceptable methods. Proper soil to seed contact is key to successful seedings.

Mulching: Mulching is essential to obtain a uniform stand of seeded plants. Optimum benefits of mulching new seedings are obtained with the use of small grain straw applied at a rate of 2 tons per acre, and anchored with a netting or tackifier. See the mulch standard and specification for choices and requirements.

Irrigation: Watering may be essential to establish a new seeding when a drought condition occurs shortly after a new seeding emerges. Irrigation is a specialized practice and care must be taken not to exceed the application rate for the soil or subsoil. When disconnecting irrigation pipe, be sure pipes are drained in a safe manor, not creating an erosion concern.

**Table 3.1**  
**Permanent Critical Area Planting Mixture Recommendations**

Seed mixture	Variety	Rate in lbs. per acre	Rate in lbs. Per 1000 sq. ft.
<b>Mix #1</b>			
Creeping red fescue	Ensylva, Pennlawn, Boreal	10	.25
Perennial ryegrass	Pennfine, Linn	10	.25
*This mix is used extensively for shaded areas.			
<b>Mix #2</b>			
Switchgrass	Shelter, Pathfinder, Trailblazer, or Blackwell	20	.5
*This rate is in pure live seed, this would be an excellent choice along the upland edge of a wetland to filter runoff and provide wildlife benefits. In areas where erosion may be a problem, a companion seeding of sand lovegrass should be added to provide quick cover at a rate of 2 lbs. per acre (0.05 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft.).			
<b>Mix #3</b>			
Switchgrass	Shelter, Pathfinder, Trailblazer, or Blackwell	4	.1
Big bluestem	Niagara	4	.1
Little bluestem	Aldous or Camper	2	.05
Indiangrass	Rumsey	4	.1
Coastal panicgrass	Atlantic	2	.05
Sideoats grama	El Reno or Trailway	2	.05
Wildflower mix		.5	.01
*This mix has been successful on sand and gravel plantings. It is very difficult to seed without a warm season grass seeder such as a Truax seed drill. Broadcasting this seed is very difficult due to the fluffy nature of some of the seed, such as bluestems and indiangrass.			
<b>Mix #4</b>			
Switchgrass	Shelter, Pathfinder Trailblazer, or Blackwell	10	.25
Coastal panicgrass	Atlantic	10	.25
*This mix is salt tolerant, a good choice along the upland edge of tidal areas and roadsides.			
<b>Mix #5</b>			
Saltmeadow cordgrass ( <i>Spartina patens</i> )—This grass is used for tidal shoreline protection and tidal marsh restoration. It is planted by vegetative stem divisions.			
'Cape' American beachgrass can be planted for sand dune stabilization above the saltmeadow cordgrass zone.			
<b>Mix #6</b>			
Creeping red fescue	Ensylva, Pennlawn, Boreal	20	.45
Tall fescue	KY 31, Rebel	20	.45
Perennial ryegrass	Pennfine, Linn	5	.10
Birdsfoot trefoil	Empire, Pardee	10	.45
*General purpose erosion control mix. Not to be used for a turf planting or play grounds.			