

'Sherman' BIG BLUEGRASS

Scientific Name: *Poa secunda*

Common Name: Big bluegrass

Cultivar Name: 'Sherman' (PI 421027)

Selected By: Pullman PMC, USDA-NRCS

Release Cooperators: Washington Idaho and Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station

Release Date: 1945

ORIGIN: 'Sherman' was collected from native vegetation near Moro, Sherman County, OR, by D.E. Stephens, superintendent of the Sherman Branch Experiment Station, Moro, in 1932. Recollected by the SCS in 1935.

DESCRIPTION: 'Sherman' starts growth very early in spring. It is productive and early maturing. It can measure between 900-965 mm tall, erect growing, and fine stemmed. It is a long-lived perennial bunchgrass; high in seed, forage, and root production. It should have a distinct blue, moderately abundant leaves; large compact seedhead. Plants are apomictic.

DISEASE AND INSECT PROBLEMS: Plant is disease resistant, but may be susceptible to leaf rust.

SEED PRODUCTION: 'Sherman' seed yields are generally highest the third season; however, with proper management, high yields can be maintained as long as four to six years. It will produce on depleted soils; however, the seed yields will be less than on better, more fertile sites. At Pullman, Sherman big bluegrass has yielded as much as 500 to 800 pounds of clean seed per acre.

SEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS: 'Sherman' requires 5 steps for a successful establishment. 1. A very firm seedbed, free from weeds or other vegetation. In wheat-summer fallow areas and on adjacent rangelands it should be planted on fallow. 2. Seed shallow--not more than 3/4 inch deep. Use depth regulators on the drill. Do not harrow or pack after seeding except following broadcast seeding. 3. Seed in late fall on coarse-textured soils in areas of less than 15 inches of annual rainfall; plant in early spring before wheat seeding begins. 4. Fertilize with 20-40 pounds actual nitrogen per acre when seeding on low fertility sites or depleted cropland. 5. Treat seed with an approved fungicide or seed protectant before planting.

CONSERVATION USES: Early spring grazing by cattle or sheep is one of the primary uses of big bluegrass seedings. Upland game birds, especially pheasants, prefer big bluegrass fields for nesting.

AVAILABILITY: For additional information contact: Wayne Crowder, Soil Conservationist, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pullman Plant Materials Center (509) 335-7376 or email crowder@wsu.edu.