Xeriscape Grasses

The following four grasses are found in Marshall Public Library’s Xeriscape Garden. Are all drought-tolerant and recommended for Pocatello’s climate and soils.

**Blue Grama** (*Bouteloua gracilis*)
A warm season bunch grass

**Height**: Grows to 8 - 15 inches; mow to a height of 2.5 - 3 inches or leave unmowed to allow development of attractive seedheads

**Watering**: .5 to .75 of an inch every 2 weeks during hot, dry spells

**Sun/Shade**: Likes full sun; poor to fair shade tolerance

**Traffic**: Fair tolerance to traffic during periods of active growth

**Texture**: Fine blades with soft texture during periods of active growth

**Color**: Blue-green

**Seeding**: In spring when soil reaches 60°F up until 10 weeks before fall frost

**Advantages**: Attractive and requires minimal water and fertilizer once established; won’t invade flower or vegetable beds; good for sunny areas such as slopes where foot traffic is minimal; grows well in clay and low fertility soils; few insect or disease problems; very heat- and drought-tolerant; goes dormant when stressed and can stay dormant for extended periods

**Disadvantages**: Not very traffic tolerant during dormancy (October to May); weeds and weed control can be a problem,

---

**Tall Fescue** (*Festuca arundinacea*)
A cool season bunch grass

**Height**: Grows to 24 - 48 inches, mow to a height of 3 inches

**Watering**: .5 to 1 inch every week during hot, dry spells

**Sun/Shade**: Likes full sun to moderate shade

**Traffic**: Good tolerance

**Texture**: Wide leaf blades with coarse texture

**Color**: Dark green

**Seeding**: Spring or fall when temperature is between 60-75°F

**Advantages**: Attractive; does well in shade; few insect or disease problems; won’t invade flower or vegetable beds; lower fertility requirements

**Disadvantages**: Requires regular supplemental irrigation; because of the fibrous root system, bare spots will need to be reseeded; wider blades may shred when mower blades are dull

---

**Buffalograss** (*Bouteloua dactyloides*)
A warm season sod-forming grass

**Height**: Grows to 4 - 8 inches, mow to a height of 2 - 2.5 inches, or leave unmowed

**Watering**: .5 to .75 of an inch every 2 weeks during hot, dry spells

**Sun/Shade**: Likes full sun; poor to fair shade tolerance

**Traffic**: Fair to good tolerance to traffic during periods of active growth

**Texture**: Fine blades with soft texture during periods of active growth

**Color**: Blue-green

**Seeding**: May and June

**Advantages**: Attractive and requires minimal water and fertilizer once established; good for sunny areas such as slopes where foot traffic is minimal; grows well in heavy clay soils; few insect or disease problems; low fertility requirement; very heat and drought tolerant; goes dormant when stressed and can stay dormant for extended periods

**Disadvantages**: Not very traffic tolerant during dormancy (October to May); weed control can be a problem; more prone to weed invasion when over-fertilized; stolons will invade vegetable and flower beds; will not grow in sandy soils; does not perform well as a lawn above 6000 feet

---

**Sodar Wheatgrass** (*Elymus lanceolatus*)
A cool season sod-forming grass

**Height**: Grows to 12 - 18 inches, mow to height of 3 - 4 inches minimum, do not mow the year of establishment until seedheads appear

**Watering**: .5 to .75 of an inch every 2 weeks during hot, dry spells, do not over-water

**Sun/Shade**: Likes full sun to moderate shade

**Traffic**: Fair tolerance to traffic

**Texture**: Wide leaf blades with coarse texture

**Color**: Blue-green

**Seeding**: Early spring or late fall

**Advantages**: Germinates easily; goes dormant when stressed, easily revived; needs only occasional mowing to stay neat; little fertilizer needed; excellent erosion control; doesn’t attract wildlife, excellent weed barrier when established

**Disadvantages**: Produces numerous stems and seed head the first few years; not tolerant of wet or poorly drained soil

Content used with permission from Denver Water
www.denverwater.org
4. WATER THE NEW LAWN
A newly-seeded lawn must be kept moist, but not saturated, until the seeds germinate. Depending on the temperature and site conditions, this may mean watering for a short time, several times a day. As the grass begins to grow, reduce the frequency of watering. After four to six weeks, watering should be reduced to the amount recommended for an established lawn of the type planted.

For new sod, water enough to ensure that the soil beneath the sod stays moist, but not waterlogged. Water twice a day for the first week, and once a day for the second week. At this point, roots should be established in the new soil, and watering can be reduced to the amount recommended for an established lawn of that type. Reprogram your sprinkler as the temperature changes.

Content used with permission from Denver Water
www.denverwater.org

VISIT THE
Marshall Public Library
Xeriscape Garden
113 S. Garfield Ave.
Pocatello, ID 83204
208/232-1263
www.marshallpl.org