

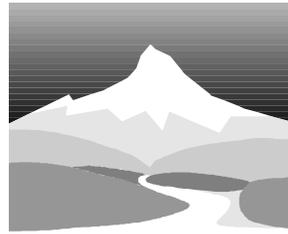
Green Grass and Water Conservation?

Although it's OK to let your lawn go dormant in summer, a green lawn is important to many homeowners. By utilizing specific grass seed blends that incorporate turf-type tall fescues, you can:

- **Have a Green Lawn**
- **Conserve Water and Fish**
- **Save Money**

Conserving water is an important goal for all of us. Reducing water consumption is possible through the use of more efficient watering technologies and adapted plants. Saving water means **lower utility bills**, and improved habitat for fish and other animals that depend on Hood River's streams. Every drop counts!

For more information and availability of Water Warden™ and other water saving grasses and plants, contact the Hood River Watershed Group.



Hood River Watershed Group
3007 Experiment Station Road
Hood River, OR 97031

Phone: 541-386-6063
Email: hoodriver@gorge.net
Web: hoodriverswcd.org

For additional assistance and supplies, please contact:

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- Hood River Watershed Group—541-386-6063
(General Information and technical assistance)
 - Hughes Feed & Grain—541-296-5441
(Water Warden™ tall fescue grass seed retailer)
 - Sawyers True Value—541-296-4814
(Water Warden™ tall fescue grass seed retailer)
 - Gresham Coastal Farm and Ranch—503-674-5337
(Water Warden™ tall fescue grass seed retailer)
 - Grower Direct Inc.—1-888-860-5274
(Tall fescue sod retailer)
 - OSU Extension—541-386-3343
(Ecolawn information and advice)
 - HR Soil & Water Conservation Dist.—541-386-4588
(General conservation technical assistance)

Hood River Valley
Homeowners

Green Lawns that Save Water and Money!



Tips on how to:

- **enjoy a green lawn**
- **reduce your water bill**
- **enhance your watershed!**

Hood River Watershed Group

Water in the West

The two biggest consumers of water in the Hood River valley are agriculture (orchard) irrigation, and residential / commercial use. High water demand combined with seasonal dryness make water a scarce commodity during most summer months. Low water levels in our rivers stress fish and other aquatic organisms. In fact, depleted stream flow is the most important factor limiting fish in the Hood basin.

Fortunately, folks are now doing work aimed at leaving more water in our rivers. Orchard farmers are lowering their water use by switching to



Apple orchard in bloom. There are over 13,800 acres of irrigated orchards in the Hood River watershed.

water saving micro-sprinklers and closed pipelines. Meanwhile, landowners, agencies, tribes and businesses are improving fish habitat by completing various on-ground restoration projects, in partnership with the Hood River Watershed Group.

What You Can Do!

Reduce your water consumption, wherever and whenever possible. Outdoor water consumption for lawns and gardens represents a large proportion of domestic water consumption. On average in the US, outdoor water use accounts for 32% of total domestic consumption*. Plants that need less water do make a difference. Little by little, every drop counts.

*Source: The US EPA "Cleaner Water Through Conservation" (www.epa.gov/water/you/intro).

Drought Tolerant Turf Grass

Landscaping is part art, part science and part hard work! If you are considering a new lawn, you need to decide what kind of grass you want to use. What are your needs? Will there be high traffic? Will the grass require frequent and therefore expensive watering? There is a lot to consider.

Turf Grass Varieties -

There are over 10,000 species of grass in the world. Of these, there are numerous types of grasses used for lawns in cool climates like Hood River's, including:

- Bluegrass
- Bentgrass
- Ryegrass
- **Fescue***
- Grama



Tall fescue grass stays green with less water than traditional rye & blue grasses.

*Of all these turf grasses and their many varieties, **Turf-type Tall Fescue** shows exceptional promise in our area for its low water requirements.

Tall Fescue Characteristics -

- (1) Uses up to 75% less water once established
- (2) Green look and soft feel we expect in a lawn
- (3) Tolerates periodic droughts
- (4) Abundant deep and fibrous roots
- (5) Adaptable to both sun and shade
- (6) Resists impacts of high foot traffic

There are many options when it comes to water conservation and landscaping. One turf grass blend that shows promise is called Water Warden™, a blend of three turf-type tall fescues.

Tips on Establishing a Lawn

You've got two basic choices when it comes to lawn establishment, **Sod** or **Seed**. Please consult a garden or landscape expert for detailed advice.

Sod: Best for small areas and quick results, sod rolls out like carpet. Optimal time for planting sod is in when temperatures are cool and conditions are moist. Fall and spring are optimal. Turf-type tall fescues like Water Warden™ are available in sod form.

Seed: Often the more economic option, seeding is good for bare spots in existing lawns or establishing new lawns. Follow recommended seeding rates (lb/sq ft) and gently till into soil with a garden rake. Consider spreading straw mulch peat moss to provide wind and moisture shelter for the germinating seeds. The optimal seeding time is spring. Water Warden™ is available in seed.

Soil Preparation: Depending on the soil type and existing vegetation cover, it will be necessary to lightly till (i.e., roto-till) compacted soils to a depth of 4-6 in. After tilling, use a roller to create a firm seed bed. Remove competing vegetation, rocks and other debris. It is important to create smooth surfaces for mowing and consider the effect of steep slopes and shallow spots on drainage. Light organically based soil amendments, humates, mycorrhizae, or slow release fertilizers can be beneficial.

Watering: Remember that no matter how drought tolerant a plant may be, it needs regular, consistent and often deep watering to become established. This can be required for the first two to three seasons. Maintain soil moisture for sod and seeds through these first few seasons and allow for full drainage between watering. Once established, tall fescues requires infrequent but deep watering.

Mowing: For turf-type tall fescues blends, keep your mower adjusted at 2-3 inches and consider leaving the clippings on the ground.