



Olathe Orchardgrass

A new early orchardgrass by DLF that is very high yielding, has high disease tolerance, and handles heat and stress well. Ideal for producers in the intense southern climates that are looking for a high energy option that jumps out early in the spring and yields big. Olathe was not selected under grazing pressure and is best for hay use.

Establishment

Olathe Orchardgrass exhibits exceptional seedling vigor and establishes rapidly. When planting north of the transition zone, Olathe should be planted in the early spring or late summer to take advantage of soil moisture and moderate temperatures. In the transition zone, planting should occur in the late summer or early fall. Prior to planting, take a soil test and apply adequate phosphorous and potassium if necessary. At planting, apply 35-40 lbs/acre nitrogen to ensure good establishment. Olathe may be established via full cultivation, no-till, or broadcast seeding. Plant no deeper than 1/4 inch below the surface in a firm seed bed.

Management

Orchardgrass is categorized as a bunch grass. Careful stand management during the first year is essential for long-term productivity. Orchardgrass grows and spreads laterally by creating new shoots called tillers which emanate from the base of the plant forming an ever-wider bunch. To enable the production of a leafy dense stand, the height of the stand during the first year should ideally be maintained in the 4-12 inch range. This allows full sunlight penetration to the plant base which triggers production of the tillers needed for maximum plant growth and spread. Once the seedlings are firmly rooted, graze lightly by calves, or machine mow several times before heavy use. This will promote further tillering and growth. To enhance production in subsequent years, a spring application of 50 lbs/acre of nitrogen is recommended to jump start early growth, followed by periodic applications of 30-40 lbs/acre timed with rainfall or irrigation. In mild winter areas an early fall application of 50 lbs/acre of nitrogen can extend the harvest period well beyond the normal season. Cold winter survival is enhanced by entering winter with the grass left at a short but still green 4-5 inch height.

At A Glance

Key Features

- Early variety
- Ideal for southeast climate and transition zone
- Quick to establish
- High yielding
- Best for hay use—not bred for grazing pressure
- Exceptional palatability and digestibility
- Outstanding disease resistance
- Heat and drought tolerant

Establishment

Use the large box of the drill

Seeding rate: 20 lbs/acre

Seeding with alfalfa:

5-10 lbs/acre



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