

• FINE-LEAF FESCUES •

Of note:

1. Fine fescues are well adapted to infertile, acidic soils.
2. Fine textured leaves are not tolerant of wear, so these grasses are not a good choice for heavy traffic areas.
3. They are the most tolerant of shaded conditions compared to other cool-season grass species.
4. Fine fescues often have a "brown haze" appearance under hot dry conditions.



The fine-leaf fescues include several *Festuca* species and subspecies of cool-season grasses characterized by narrow needle-like leaves and primarily bunch type growth habit. Fine fescues are often used in mixtures with Kentucky bluegrass and/or perennial ryegrass. However, blends of 100% fine fescue are increasingly popular for low

maintenance, low traffic sites and are sometimes called "low mow" or "no mow" grasses. The most common of this group are **strong creeping red fescue** (*festuca rubra* ssp. *rubra*), **chewings fescue** (*Festuca rubra* ssp. *commutata*), **hard fescue** (*Festuca trachyphylla*) and **sheep fescue** (*Festuca ovina*).

Strong creeping red fescue, sometimes referred to as “creeping red” or “spreading fescue”, is weakly rhizomatous and therefore has a more vigorous growth habit than the other fine fescues.



Chewings fescue is a bunch type grass that is low growing and usually forms a dense turf. It is a popular component in home lawn seed mixes.

Hard fescue is a low growing bunch type grass with good drought tolerance. Slow growing, it forms a dense turf and is a common choice for lower maintenance areas.

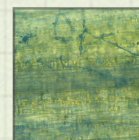
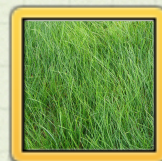
Sheep fescue is a very slow growing bunch type grass often used for erosion control. It requires little maintenance and is a good choice for sites that will receive little or no mowing.



Fine Fescue Characteristics



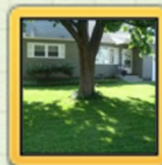
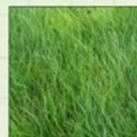
FINE TEXTURE: Fine fescues have narrow, needle-like leaves, making them the finest textured of the cool-season grass species.



Fine Fescue spp. Characteristics



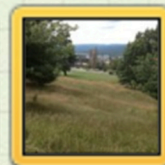
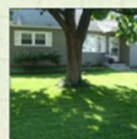
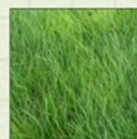
SHADE: *Fine fescues are the most shade tolerant of the cool-season turfgrass species, but they are adapted to sunny conditions too.*



Fine Fescue spp. Characteristics



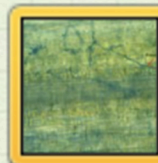
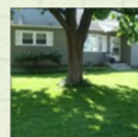
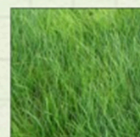
LESS NITROGEN: *Fine fescues are adapted to low fertility soils and do not require as much nitrogen as Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass.*



Fine Fescue spp. Characteristics



ENDOPHYTE: Most varieties of fine fescue contain endophytic fungi. These beneficial fungi live in the leaf sheath and produce chemicals that deter surface-feeding insects such as chinch bugs and sod webworm. Endophytes have no effect on white grubs or other subsurface feeders.

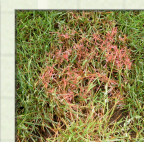


Fine Fescue Common Concerns



Emmons/Rossi

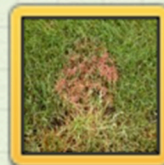
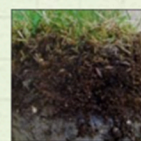
THATCH: Under high fertility, fine fescues often become aggressive thatch producers. Excessive accumulation can cause significant problems if not managed properly.



Fine Fescue spp. Common Concerns



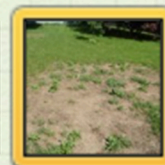
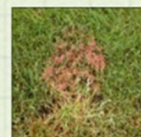
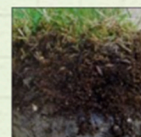
DISEASES: Red thread is a common problem in wet conditions, particularly if heavily fertilized. Look for resistant varieties.



Fine Fescue spp. Common Concerns



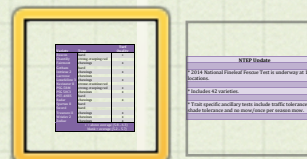
TRAFFIC: *Due to their fine texture and relatively slow growth, fine fescues are not a good choice for heavily trafficked sites.*



Fine Fescue Varieties

Variety	Type	Turf Quality
Beacon	hard	+
Chantilly	strong creeping red	
Fairmont	chewings	+
Gotham	hard	
Intrigue 2	chewings	+
Lacrosse	chewings	
Longfellow 3	chewings	+
Navigator II	strong creeping red	
PSG-5RM	strong creeping red	+
PSG 50C3	chewings	+
PST-4HES	hard	
Radar	chewings	+
Spartan II	hard	
Sword	hard	
Treasure II	chewings	+
Wrigley 2	chewings	+
Zodiac	chewings	+
+ = above average (5.8 – 6.3) blank = average (5.2 – 5.7)		

Table 8: Compiled from NTEP Fineleaf Fescue Final Report (customized data provided by NTEP for four locations in the Northeast Region, data from 2009 - 2013).



NTEP Update

* 2014 National Fineleaf Fescue Test is underway at 10 locations.

* Includes 42 varieties.

* Trait specific ancillary tests include traffic tolerance, shade tolerance and no mow/once per season mow.

