

# SEED LABELS & QUALITY



Purchase of high quality seed is a critical investment toward establishment and long-term success of high quality turf, so an understanding of seed label terminology is important. Required by federal law, the seed label must contain certain information, including: species/variety, purity, germination percentage, crop and weed seed, noxious weeds and date tested. Refer to the following sections to learn how to read a label and how to identify inferior products.



## • SEED LABEL TERMINOLOGY •

**(1)** Pure seed, or purity, is the percent by weight of each component of the mixture. This mix contains 22.3% 'Award' Kentucky bluegrass, 25.0% 'Midnight' Kentucky bluegrass, and so on. Purity refers to seed quantity, not quality.

Pure live seed (PLS) is a term used to indicate how much seed is capable of germination based on purity and germination percentages.

**(2)** This mix contains three varieties of Kentucky bluegrass ('Award', 'Midnight' and 'Rhapsody'), one variety of perennial ryegrass ('Fiesta 4'), and one variety of creeping red fescue ('Intrigue'). **(3)** The percentage of pure seed that germinates under ideal laboratory conditions. Since conditions in the real world will be less than ideal, higher is better. Look for at least 80%.

**(4)** Place of origin for each component of the mix. **(5)** Other crop seed is the percent by weight of any seed

that is grown as a commercial crop. These could include timothy, clover and bentgrass, so the closer to zero the better. **(6)** Weed seed is the percent by weight of any seed that is not identified as either pure seed or other crop seed. The lower the percentage, the better.

**(7)** Inert matter is the percent by weight of all material in the bag that will not grow. This could include seed parts or soil and does not contribute any value to the mix, so less is better. **(8)** Noxious

weeds are very difficult to control and vary from state to state. There should be **none** in the mix. **(9)** This is the date of the germination test. Germination percentage declines with age of the seed, so look for seed that was tested within the last 9 months. **(10)** The lot number allows the supplier to trace history of the seed should there be a problem. **(11)** Supplier of the seed.

PREMIUM SEED MIXTURE			
Pure Seed (1)	Variety/Species (2)	Germination (3)	Origin (4)
22.3%	'Award' Kentucky Bluegrass	85%	OR
25.0%	'Midnight' Kentucky Bluegrass	85%	OR
26.2%	'Rhapsody' Kentucky Bluegrass	85%	WA
11.0%	'Fiesta 4' Perennial Ryegrass	90%	WA
14.5%	'Intrigue' Creeping Red Fescue	90%	OR
Other Ingredients:	0.00% Other Crop Seed (5)		
	0.00% Weed Seed (6)		
	1.00% Inert Matter (7)		
	No Noxious Weeds (8)		
Tested: May 2014 (9)	Lot #123-45-67 (10)		
	ABC Seed Company (11)		



## • OTHER INDICATORS OF QUALITY •



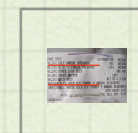
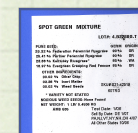
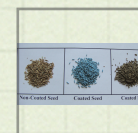
In an effort to exploit the genetic diversity of the turfgrasses available in the commercial market, many turfgrass professionals combine species and varieties to improve success and adaptability. A *seed blend* is the combination of two or more varieties of the same species, such as three varieties of Kentucky bluegrass. A *seed mixture* is the

combination of different turfgrass species such as a Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. Mixtures often contain more than one variety of each species. The gallery on [page 43](#) reviews some of the things to look for and to avoid when purchasing seed.





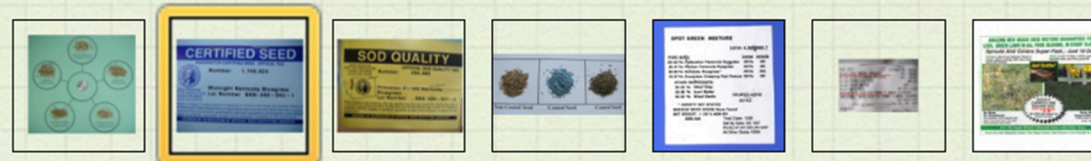
**SEED SIZE:** In addition to seed weight, seed number is a critical and often overlooked aspect of seed mixing which determines seeding rate. For example, a mix containing 70% perennial ryegrass and 30% Kentucky bluegrass, by weight, is about 50/50 on a seed count basis. Aggressive seedling growth of perennial ryegrass means it will outcompete the bluegrass in the establishment phase. Unless it is the desired species, perennial ryegrass should not exceed 10-20% by weight of the mixture.



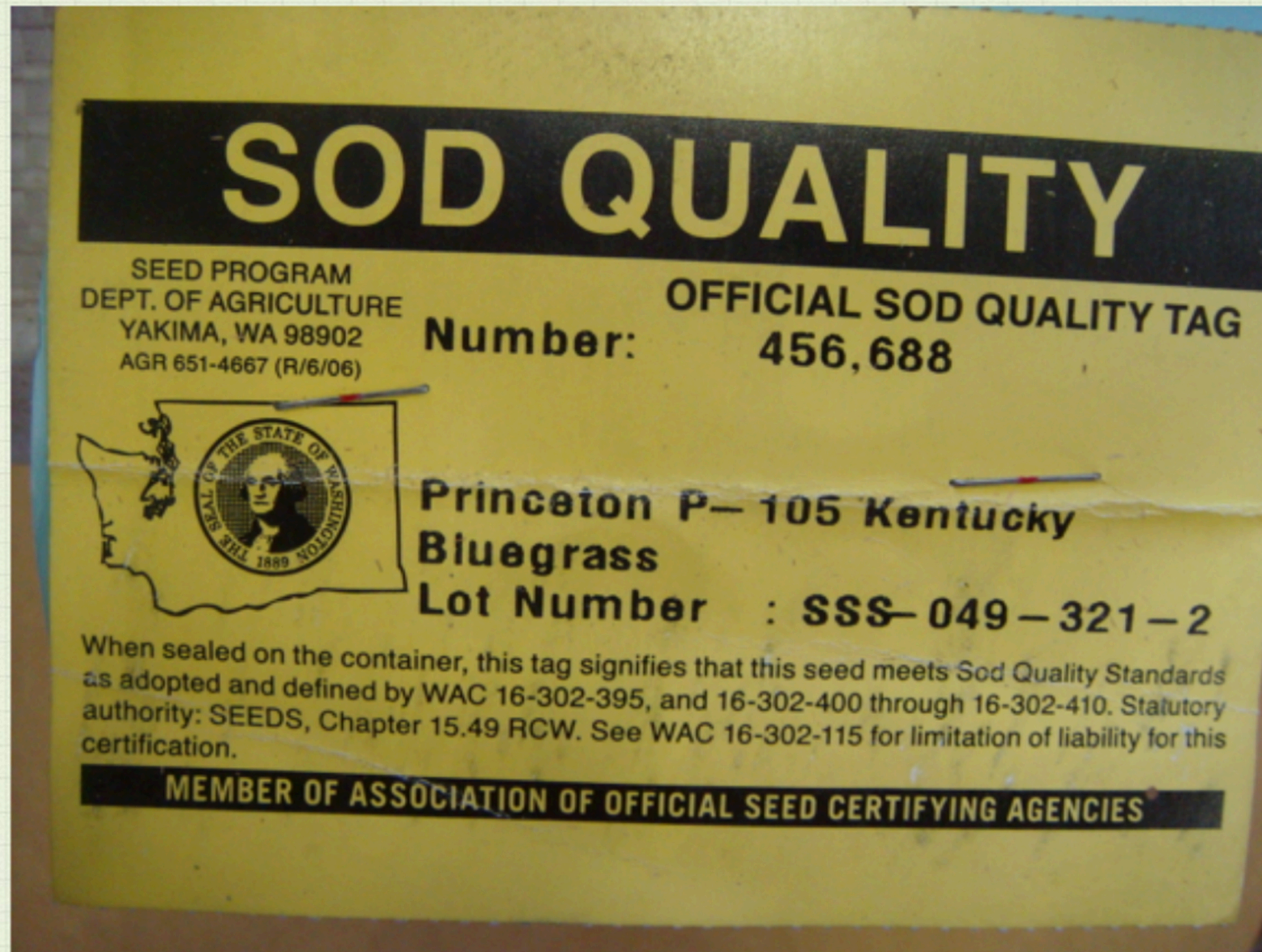




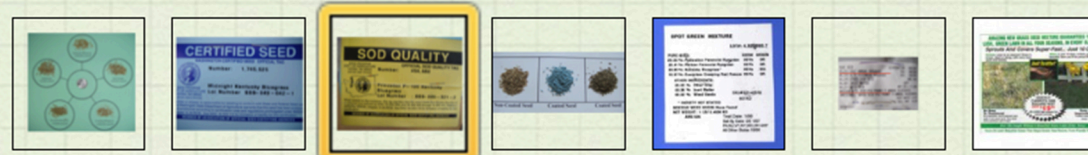
**CERTIFIED:** When available, buy certified seed. The blue certification tag guarantees that the variety in the container is what is stated on the label and conforms to a higher purity and germination standard than non-certified seed. Testing minimums and sample size vary by species and state.



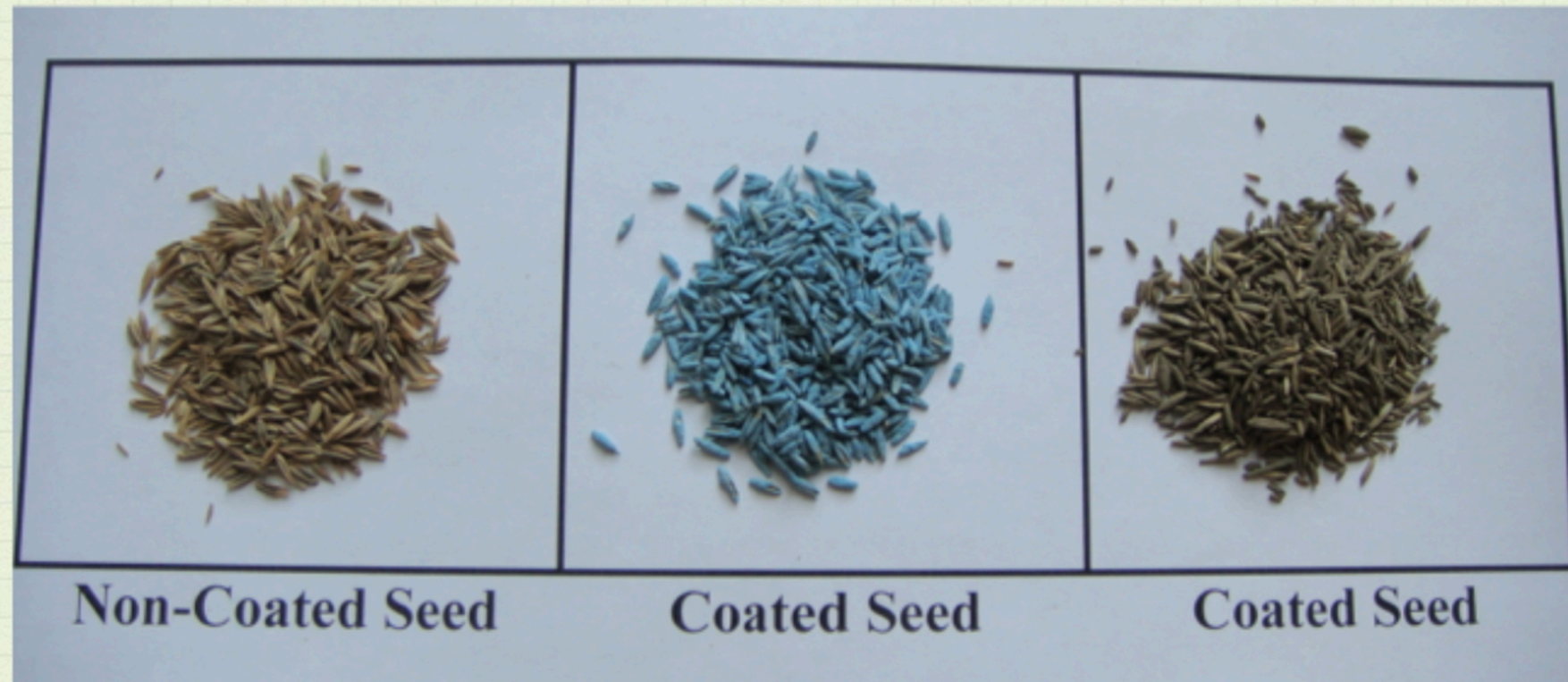




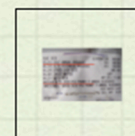
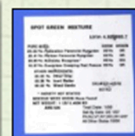
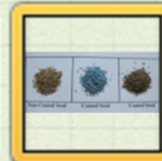
**SOD QUALITY:** Indicated by the yellow tag, sod quality is the highest quality seed available. All sod quality seed is certified seed, but there are stricter purity and germination standards to qualify as sod quality.







**COATED SEED:** Some coatings help retain water and can improve germination in less than ideal conditions when moisture is limited. However, overall establishment and density is unlikely to be improved if the stand is not watered properly over time. Seed may also be coated with fungicides. Coatings may account for 50% or more of the total weight in a bag of grass seed, an important consideration since seed is sold by weight.





LOT#: 4.B228SG.T

**PURE SEED:**

	GERM	ORIGIN
28.32 % Federation Perennial Ryegrass	90 %	OR
25.41 % Partner Perennial Ryegrass	90 %	OR
23.88 % Kentucky Bluegrass*	85 %	WA
18.97 % Evergreen Creeping Red Fescue	85 %	OR

**OTHER INGREDIENTS:**

00.02 % Other Crop  
03.38 % Inert Matter  
00.02 % Weed Seeds

SKU# 021-42519

60TRD

\* VARIETY NOT STATED

NOXIOUS WEED SEEDS: None Found

NET WEIGHT: 1 LB/ 0.4536 KG

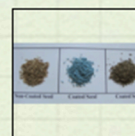
AMS 535

Test Date: 1/06

Sell By Date: DE 1/07

PA.NJ.VT.NY.NH.OH 4/07

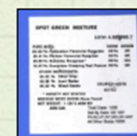
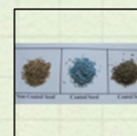
**VARIETY NOT STATED:** Sometimes labeled "VNS", avoid mixes where the varieties are not identified. A poor quality turf is likely to result from seed mixes that include unnamed varieties.





PURE SEED	GERMINATION	ORIGIN
<u>93.55% GULF ANNUAL RYEGRASS</u>	90%	OREGON
05.72% ALTO PERENNIAL RYEGRASS	85%	OREGON
00.10% OTHER CROP SEED		AMS 480
00.48% INERT MATTER	LOT:	
00.15% WEED SEED	NET WT.: 3 LBS	
<u>NOXIOUS WEED SEED PER POUND: 9 ANNUAL BLUEGRASS</u>		
<u>UNDESIRABLE GRASS SEED PER POUND: 9 ANNUAL BLUEGRASS</u>	TEST DATE: 1/13	
	SELL BY: 4/14	

**ANNUAL RYEGRASS:** Many “contractor” or “landscaper” mixes contain large percentages of annual ryegrass. It establishes quickly but usually does not persist more than a season, leaving bare spots the following year. See Chapter 5, Other Grasses, for more information about appropriate uses for annual ryegrass. This mix also contains noxious weed seed.





## AMAZING NEW GRASS SEED MIXTURE GUARANTEES YOU A LUSH, GREEN LAWN IN ALL FOUR SEASONS, IN EVERY CLIMATE!

**Sprouts And Covers Super-Fast... Just 10 Days!**

**Before:** Lawn is an eyesore! Grass is brown, dead or dying, with many bare spots and weeds.

**After:** In just 10 days, a thick, green, beautiful lawn you'll be proud of!



**Just Scatter!**



**QUICKLY  
CARPETS 1000  
SQUARE FEET  
JUST \$19.95**

OR LESS! See coupon for special savings

### **So Easy To Transform!**

No preparation. Just broadcast seed, water or let nature do it. Your grass starts growing in just 5 days!

### **Even Grows In Impossible Spots:**

Problem areas that are bare, shady, weedy or hilly!

**Don't Be Caught Without A Beautiful Green Lawn—Order Today!**

**Yours At Last! Beautiful Grass That Stays Green Year-Round, From Florida To Alaska!**

**BUYER BEWARE:** Pay attention to the seed label, not the marketing claims. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

