

Wheatgrass: A Suitable Native Grass Species

By Blake Meentemeyer, agronomist, West Region

June 27, 2016

Native areas are a great alternative to manicured turf in out-of-play areas because they require much less mowing, water and fertilizer. Converting out-of-play rough areas to native plants allows resources and labor to be focused down the middle of the course where the majority of the game is played. Western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) is a good choice for secondary rough or native areas due to its open and airy growth habit. Good visibility into the turfgrass canopy allows golfers to more easily find and advance a stray ball, which improves [pace of play](#).



Western and intermediate wheatgrasses have an open and airy canopy that makes them a great choice for secondary rough or native areas.

The USGA is funding turfgrass breeding research at the USDA Forage and Range Research Laboratory in Logan, Utah, where studies have shown that wheatgrasses perform best in geographic locations that receive less than 18 to 20 inches of rainfall per year. With its characteristic blue-green color, wheatgrasses can be easily identified growing along roadsides and on golf courses throughout the Intermountain West.

Please contact a [USGA agronomist](#) to learn more about establishing a wheatgrass test plot on your golf course.

West Region Agronomists:

Patrick J. Gross, regional director – pgross@usga.org

Larry W. Gilhuly, agronomist – lgilhuly@usga.org

Brian S. Whitlark, agronomist – bwhitlark@usga.org

Blake Meentemeyer, agronomist – bmeentemeyer@usga.org

[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)