

Plants for Solving Resource Problems

'NEZPAR' INDIAN RICEGRASS

Species: *Achnatherum hymenoides*
 Common Name: Indian Ricegrass
 Plant Symbol: ACHY
 Accession Number: PI-469230

Source: 'Nezpar' was first collected in 1935 from a native plant community near Whitebird in north central Idaho. It was tested under the number P-2575. Detailed collection site information is not available.

Native Site Information: Indian ricegrass is a beautiful perennial bunchgrass native to western North America. It can be found from Mexico to southern Canada on sandy desert floors, canyons, plains or southerly exposed dry mountain sites. It is often found growing with shadscale, fourwing saltbush, sagebrush, greasewood, mountain brush and less often at the edges of coniferous forest communities.

Method of Selection: Nezpar was selected from a group of 125 collected accessions at the Pullman, Washington, Plant Materials Center. It was selected for its good vegetative characteristics and low hard seed content. It was included in one of the first trials conducted at the Aberdeen, Idaho, Plant Materials Center in 1939. Nezpar was compared to more than 70 accessions of Indian ricegrass from 10 states and was found to be superior or equal to all with regard to germination and establishment. It was judged to be superior to 'Paloma' and 11 other accessions for stand survival and yield.

Description: Nezpar is a densely tufted perennial bunchgrass. It produces numerous erect culms up to 30 inches tall with the bases of previous years persisting. Blades are narrow and involute (rolled).



'Nezpar'
Indian Ricegrass

The inflorescence is a loose, open panicle, each branch being tipped with a spikelet bearing a single plump floret.

Use: Nezpar is a beautiful grass that can be used as a component of a seed mix for rangeland, erosion control (mine spoil and critical area stabilization), forage, cover and xeriscape seedings in areas receiving at least 8 inches mean annual precipitation.

Indian ricegrass cures well, providing nutritious winter feed for wildlife and all classes of livestock. Plants do best when grazed in fall and winter. Stands deteriorate under spring grazing. The plump seeds are

very high in energy and provide excellent food for birds and rodents.

Insect and Disease Problems: No detrimental disease symptoms or insect problems have been observed in plantings of Nezpar.

Environmental Considerations: This release is from a species native to the Intermountain West and has no known negative impacts on wild or domestic animals. Nezpar is not considered a weedy or invasive species but can spread to adjoining vegetative communities under ideal environmental conditions.

Area of Adaptation: Nezpar will establish and persist as a stand when properly planted and managed. It is best adapted to coarse soils in regions that receive 8 to 14 inches annual precipitation. At higher elevations (6,000 ft and above) where average annual temperature is 40° F or less, plantings should be restricted to south and west facing slopes or other "hot" locations.

Soil Adaptation: Nezpar does best on loamy sands, sandy loams, fine sandy loams and gravelly well drained soils. It does not persist well on fine textured or poorly drained soils.

Planting and Harvesting: Nezpar should be dormant seeded in the fall (late October–December) with a drill on a firm, weed-free seedbed at a depth of ½ to 1 inch on medium-textured soils and ¾ to 3 inches on coarse textured soils. Seeding depth and time of planting (late fall) aid in stratification of the seed. In less arid situations, shallower planting depths may be preferable depending on soil and age of seed. (Older seed does not have as much dormancy or the same capacity as younger seed to emerge from deep planting depths).

The full seeding rate is 6 pounds Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre. When used as a component of a seed mix, adjust to the percent of mix desired. For seed production, Nezpar should be seeded in 36 inch rows at 3.5 pounds PLS per acre to allow mechanical

weed control and to maintain rows. Allow at least two years for stand establishment.

Nezpar seed must be swathed, followed by combining of the cured windrows. The seedheads readily shatter and require close scrutiny of maturing stands. Seed is typically harvested in late July and yields range from 100 pounds per acre (dryland) to 200 pounds per acre (irrigated).

Seed Maintenance: Breeder and Foundation seed is maintained at:

USDA-NRCS, Aberdeen PMC
P.O. Box 296
1691A S. 2700 W.
Aberdeen, ID 83210
Phone: (208) 397-4133

Foundation seed is available through the University of Idaho Foundation Seed Program, Utah Crop Improvement Association and Soil Conservation Districts in Idaho, Utah and Nevada. Certification of seed shall be limited to not more than two generations from Foundation seed (Registered and Certified).

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