

Sowing & Growing Hybrid Ryegrass



Hybrid Ryegrass (*Lolium x hybridum hausskn*) is a cross between the Italian and perennial forms of ryegrass and shares characteristics of both. The dominant parent determines how the variety performs in the field. Most hybrid varieties are dominant with Italian genes and the best cultivars provide the same or similar high yields as Italian ryegrass. As they also contain some of the persistent genes of the perennial ryegrass parent, they last longer.

A further advantage of this longer lasting, high yielding silage grass is that the genes from the perennial ryegrass parent produce a plant with more tillers and leaf. It will last for up to 4 years then yields can drop away sharply after this.

When to sow: Sow in the autumn for a full crop the following spring or for winter-cover.

Sowing Rates: 3.5 g/m² - 14kg per acre - 35kg per ha

Preparation: Good preparation of the seed bed before sowing is vital to achieve a fine tilth. A cloddy (or lumpy) seed bed will hamper germination, so it is best to harrow or disc the soil to break it up. Once this has been done, it is important to roll the seed bed before sowing. Rolling will consolidate the soil and make the seed bed firmer.

Sowing: Drill into a fine, firm seedbed at 10 - 20mm. Rolling with either a cambridge or flat roller before and after sowing is recommended. Broadcast seed should be harrowed lightly after sowing and before rolling.

Management: Generally hybrid ryegrass will head around the 3rd week of May, which is when the quality is highest.

They can be used as a dual purpose plant for silage, hay and grazing and will last for around 4 years. Common varieties are Aberecho, Kirial and Tetragraze.

Hybrid Ryegrass can also be used to stitch in or overseed tired/worn out leys to extend the lifespan and reduce the need for reseeding.