

SEEDING A CEREAL GRAIN ALONG WITH STRAW MULCH

*On properties with bare and/or disturbed soil/slope conditions**

Seeding: Broadcast common Barley grass seed as soon as possible and before mid-November on disturbed soil areas before substantial winter rains and ground saturation. If necessary, lightly grade/rake/smooth surface soil to make sure that rain water is not able to concentrate or be diverted by ridges and depressions left in soil/slope from site preparation. Barley is a non-reseeding, cold season, fast germinating cereal grain. To ensure better germination success rake seed into the upper ½ inch of soil. Cover seeded area with 2" of straw mulch (rice straw in urban/wildland interface areas only. Use rice, barley or wheat straw if in an urban setting on areas that later will be covered with a home, buildings, driveways, etc.) to protect the soil until the grass cover is established. Refer to fact sheet on straw mulching and note below for more details. *Note: Most other grass seed, such as erosion control mixes or native perennials are warmer season grasses and will have difficulty growing fast or even germinating in late fall*

Irrigation: Consider irrigating planting to initial establishment or until the first substantial rainfall if irrigation water is available. Having a root system established before significant rainfall will significantly reduce erosion

Straw Mulching: Broadcast rice, barley, wheat or native grass straw mulch on bare or disturbed soil areas especially on steeper slopes outside of building envelope to provide protection to the soil, slow runoff and trap sediment. Do not apply straw any deeper than 2 inches because it will slow/prevent seed germination and/or slow natural regeneration of resident native seed already in the soil. Apply loose rice or weed-free straw in any other erosion hazard areas as needed after rainfall/runoff events. Make sure that no straw ends up in drainage ditches or waterways. To help secure it in place you can "punch/tuck" it into the soil using a shovel, hoe or spade a few inches about every 3-4 feet.

Note: Use only rice straw or certified weed free cereal grain straw if home site/property is adjacent to a wildland or other natural area. Straw may need to be held in place with the use of jute netting on steep slopes where "hand punching/tucking" is not feasible or ineffective, that is, if the site is smooth and conducive to netting. Rice straw has little or no weed seed in it and seems to be the straw of choice however it is more difficult to spread. It's also lighter than barley or wheat straw and may be displaced by wind more easily.

Straw Wattles/Fiber Rolls: One or more fiber roll/straw wattles may be needed on the contour of sloping properties especially up and/or downslope of house sites and additional ones to protect roads or streets, and/or drainage courses/streams to slow runoff and trap sediment/debris. Make sure that wattles are "keyed in" in to soil 3-4 inches and securely staked (max. 4' spacing) so that runoff does not by pass the wattle or allow water to go under the wattle. Refer to fact sheet on fiber rolls/wattles for details.

Home Site Drainage Systems: Make sure to make repairs, replace and clean all drains, inlets, outlets, rock lined ditches, etc. on the property and maintain after each storm event. Concentrated surface drainage can quickly erode newly seeded areas if these sources of runoff are not controlled.

Existing Site Vegetation: Maintain as much existing vegetation in and around critical treatment areas as possible. Do not remove any non-hazardous trees, undesirable plants, or make any major soil/slope disturbances before the rainy season.

**This fact sheet was developed by Rich Casale, Natural Resource Conservationist & Certified Professional Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist (#3), assisting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider and lender*