

Spotlight on Species  
Tall fescue (Chapter 6 pg 129-138)  
(*Festuca arundinacea*)

Background

- The most common species in southern Ohio
- “you love it or you hate it”



tall fescue stand

ID

- sharp leaf margins
- thick, coarse, upright leaves
- pronounced leaf veins
- no auricles, very small ligule



tall fescue seed head

Use

- low-medium quality, suitable for breeding cows
- winter stock-pile

Agronomy

- moderate cold tolerance
- tolerant of low fertility
- very dominant, usually takes over from other species it is planted with
- old stands usually endophyte infected, new varieties usually not infected

Common varieties

- old varieties: Kentucky 31 (K31) (coarse and endophyte-infected)
- new varieties: Bronson, Jessup (for southern states), MaxQ

Establishment

- seed: 2.6 g / 1000 seed, medium establishment rate
- sowing rate 15-20 lb/ac for a pure sowing, 5-8 lb/ac in mixtures
- can be spring (April) or fall (August) planted, 0.25-0.5" depth, ideally sown with a Brillouin seeder, but can be no-till planted (too slow for frost seeding)