

Elymus virginicus - Virginia Wildrye



Native to prairies, streambanks, pastures, fields, roadsides and disturbed areas of the eastern United States and southern Canada, Virginia wildrye is a fast-growing, cool season perennial bunchgrass. Plants form small, dense, erect tufts of green to silver-blue foliage with a waxy sheen. Virginia wildrye grows 2-4 feet high by 2 feet wide. From May to July, greenish flowers bloom on 3-6-inch stiff, arching spikelets. Inflorescences resembles those of wheat and are ornamental, waving in summer breezes. Foliage and seed spikes turn tan in autumn. Virginia wildrye will self-seed.

Hardy to USDA zone 3 (-40 degrees F), Virginia wildrye grows best in moist, fertile soil in sun to part shade but is adaptable to a variety of soils.

Virginia wildrye is deer resistant, useful as a cut flower and effective as an erosion control. Plants are the larval host for several species of butterflies and moths. Birds and small rodents use this plant for nesting materials and eat the seeds.