



POST-FIRE SEEDING

First, any seeding recommendations are usually site-specific. It may be that a burned area has not burned severely enough to kill the existing seed bank, or instead if it is more severely burned (mostly white ash) the seedbank may be killed. Many of the native grasses, forbs, shrubs, and even trees will resprout after a fire – you may already see some of this happening. For any seeding in wooded or chaparral areas, probably fast growing but sterile/non-reproducing grasses* are best for short-term erosion control. But for grassland/vineyard edge areas already populated with non-native grass and forb species, any erosion control seed mix would also be ok.

* Quick growing but mostly sterile cereal barley and triticale seed are available from Le Ballister's in Santa Rosa, although they should also be readily available from other vendors (we at NRCS are to avoid making specific vendor recommendations). They described:

(Cover Crop Barley –Fairly sterile, and should be completely gone within 2-3 years with minor sprouting within this timeframe. Plenty on stock, and .33/lb.

Cover Crop Triticale - Fairly sterile, and should be completely gone within 2-3 years with minor sprouting within this timeframe. Taller in nature than barley, especially in good quality soil, and does well in water logged areas, and or colder environments. Plenty in stock, and .48/lb.

The broadcast seeding rate for both should be 80-100lbs/acre.)

Two longer-term native seed mixes for forested or chaparral areas (much slower to establish and more expensive but which don't introduce any invasive new species), are also sold by Le Ballister's, Hillside Native Perennial Blend and Holdfast Native Blend (<http://leballisters.com/product-category/native-mixes/>) that don't appear to have any harmful species in them.

Hedgerow Farm, Harmon Farm Supply, and Lerner Seed all have native erosion control blends as well.

One can do a soil hydrophobicity test to see if more severe burning has caused a water-repellant layer in the soil which would prevent rainfall from properly soaking in and make soil erosion more likely. If you want to test soil for hydrophobicity, scrape off the top ash layers down to mineral soil and place an eyedropper drop of water on a level place. If the drop stays on the surface for a minute, that layer has hydrophobicity. If not, it doesn't. Dig the soil another ½ to one inch deeper and repeat the drop of water test. One can thus find out how thick any hydrophobic layer is. Typically, lower burn severity areas will likely not have soil hydrophobicity.

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