

# Buying Grass Seed?

## Buyer Beware: It's the Law



As a purchaser of seed, you are looking for quality seed that will deliver plants with the characteristics that you need. For example, you will want varieties that are suited to your soil types and climate and you may be looking for seed that will deliver winter hardiness, drought, disease, and pest tolerance. You may buy specific varieties for the attributes attributed to them, so you need to be assured that you are actually getting the variety identified on the seed bag.

More importantly, you need to be sure that you are buying seed that is legal for sale in Canada. There are some important things that you need to know.

### Is the seed of a registered variety?

For many crop kinds the *Seeds Act* and *Seeds Regulations* prohibit the import, advertising and sale of seed of varieties that are not registered in Canada. Most forages and forage type grass varieties may not be imported, advertised or sold in Canada unless they are registered. Before you buy seed of crop kinds listed here, make sure that they are of a registered variety.

**It's the law.** Find the registered varieties on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's website <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/variet/regvare.shtml>

**Seed of these crops cannot be sold unless the variety is registered in Canada, even if the seed variety is not named**

- Alfalfa
- Bird's foot trefoil
- Bromegrass (*meadow and smooth*)
- Canarygrass (*annual and perennial*)
- Clover (*all*)
- Fescue (*all forage type*)
- Ryegrass (*all forage type*)
- Timothy (*forage type*)
- Wheatgrass (*all*)

### What's in a Name?

Varieties of some crop kinds and types do not need to be registered in order to be sold. For example seed of turf types of fescue and ryegrass can be imported, advertised and sold without variety registration. However, the *Seeds Act* and *Seeds Regulations* still have authority over the sale of seed of these crops in Canada.

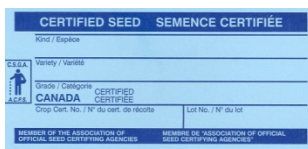
**Seed of these crops may only be labelled and sold with a variety name if it is graded with a Canada pedigreed grade name (e.g. Certified No. 1)**

- Alfalfa
- Bromegrass (all)
- Clover (all)
- Oatgrass
- Ryegrass (all)
- Wheatgrass (all)
- Alkaligrass
- Canarygrass (all)
- Fescue (all)
- Orchardgrass
- Sudan Grass
- Wildrye (all)

Plant breeders identify varieties, and the characteristics that they deliver, with a variety name. When you purchase seed labelled with a variety name, you should be assured that the seed is actually of that variety, and that it will deliver the attributes you are seeking. You should also be sure that the seed is being sold legally.

For most crop kinds, it is prohibited to use a variety name on a label, in advertising or in any way associated with the sale of seed, unless the seed has been given a pedigreed grade. Seed that does not conform to this requirement can only be sold as "Common" (non-pedigreed) seed, and it may not carry a variety name. **It's the law.**

### Look for the Blue Tag



Before you buy seed by variety name, look for the blue certified seed tag. If there is no blue tag, there is no assurance that the seed inside the bag is of a pedigreed grade. The blue tag is your assurance that you are participating in a legal sale. It's also your guarantee that you are getting what you paid for.

