Bermuda Grass Seed

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Bermudagrasses (Cynodon spp.) are among the most widely used warm-season grasses. Improved, fine-textured bermudagrasses are used throughout the south on golf courses, athletic fields, and in high-profile residential and commercial landscapes where a fine-textured, dense ground cover is desired. Because of the high maintenance requirements of the improved bermudagrasses, however, they are not generally recommended for use as a home lawngrass. Common bermudagrass varieties are often found as pasture and roadside grasses; these coarse-leaved varieties do not provide the high quality nor do they require the high maintenance of the fine-textured types.

Advantages

Bermudagrass produces a vigorous, medium green, dense turf that is well adapted to most soils and climates found in Florida. Bermudagrass has excellent wear, drought, and salt tolerance. It establishes rapidly and is able to outcompete most weed species. It is readily available as sod or plugs, and some improved cultivars are available as seeded varieties. Common varieties are available as seed, sod, or plugs.

Disadvantages

Improved bermudagrasses require high levels of maintenance. They have poor tolerance to many insect, disease, and nematode pests, which limits their use in home lawn sites. They grow very aggressively from stolons (aboveground stems) and rhizomes (belowground stems) and can rapidly invade flower and landscape beds. This aggressive growth also fosters thatch buildup. Bermudagrasses generally have poor to medium cold tolerance and relatively poor shade tolerance. Since bermudagrass performs best with higher levels of fertilizers and chemicals than other Florida lawngrasses, a professional lawn care company may best handle maintenance of this species.

Cultivars

Common Bermudagrass is a coarse-textured, low-density cultivar often found in pastures or on roadsides. It has a lighter green color and overall lower visual quality than the improved cultivars. It is available by seed or as sod, and is often mixed with bahiagrass for low-utility usage.

Hybrid Forage Bermuda Seeded Varieties - Cheyenne, Wrangler, Sahara, Giant, Pasto Rico and many others .

These newer seeded varieties have a darker green color, deeper roots, more shoot density, and a less coarse leaf texture than common bermudagrasses. While these varieties are suited for lawns, sports turf, parks, or roadsides, their performance and overall quality are comparable to common bermudagrass.

Lawn & Turf Varieties of Bermuda Grass

Many Lawn and Turf varieties of bermudagrasses can be established from seed. Some of these varieties include

Blackjack , Riviera , Oasis , Princess 77 , Bermuda Triangle and many others . Bermudagrass seed should be planted at a rate of 1 to 3 pounds of seed per 1000 square feet.

Fertilization

Proper fertilization of any lawngrass is an important component of the best management practices for your home lawn. Fertilization and other cultural practices can influence the overall health and quality of your lawn and will reduce its vulnerability to numerous stresses, including weeds, insects, and disease.

It is advisable for homeowners to have soil tests done annually. Your local Cooperative Extension Service office has recommendations and bags for taking soil samples and submitting them to the Extension Soil Testing Lab for analysis. In particular, phosphorous levels are best determined by soil testing. Since many Florida soils are high in phosphorous, little or no phosphorous may be needed for satisfactory lawn growth.

Maintaining a good-quality bermudagrass turf requires a properly planned fertilization program. Fertilizer timing and amounts for bermudagrass are based largely on the turf use. Generally, bermudagrasses require higher levels of fertilizer than other warm-season grasses for acceptable growth, durability, and appearance. Bermudagrasses can be maintained at moderate maintenance levels in areas such as lawns, athletic fields, or golf course fairways.

In general, two weeks following spring regrowth, apply a complete fertilizer such as 16-4-8 at the rate of ½ (water-soluble) to 1 (slow-release) pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet. The three numbers refer to the percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, respectively. For example, a 50-pound bag of 16-4-8 contains 16% nitrogen or 8 pounds total nitrogen. This bag will fertilize 8000 square feet at the rate of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet.

Fertilizer should be applied to bermudagrass in three to seven applications from spring green-up through fall. Do not apply nitrogen too early in the growing season, particularly in North Florida, or subsequent frosts may damage the grass. Likewise, don't fertilize too late in the year, as this can slow regrowth the following spring. If applying water-soluble forms at the lower application rate, it will take more applications to apply the total amount of fertilizer needed for the year than if applying a slow-release fertilizer form.

Mowing

Proper mowing practices are necessary to keep any lawn healthy and attractive. Both height and frequency of cut need to be adjusted for the level of turf management and season of the year. Under low to moderate levels of management, bermudagrass should be cut at a height of ¾ to 1½ inches, which may require mowing one to three times per week. Common bermudagrass should be mowed at the highest recommended heights. This will help the grass develop a deep root system and give it a better appearance. Under higher levels of management, bermudagrass can be maintained at a height of ½ inch if the turf is mowed daily during the growing season. Mowing at this height and frequency requires more fertilizer and water to maintain an attractive and durable turf. It should be noted that low cutting heights and high maintenance levels predispose the turf to many weed and pest problems. Under low to moderate management practices, mowing frequency should be adjusted to the amount of growth. Remove no more than 1/3 of the total leaf blade with any mowing. A reel mower is preferred for cutting bermudagrass. This gives a cleaner cut, and these mowers can also be more accurately adjusted to low heights. In a home lawn situation, a rotary mower may be used if the blades are sharp and well-adjusted to get a clean, smooth cut and if the cutting height is high enough for the mower. Grass clippings can be left on turf maintained with low to moderate fertility levels if mowed at the proper height and frequency. The clippings do not contribute to thatch, and they provide supplemental sources of nutrients. Remove the clippings only if the amount is so excessive that clumps form, or if appearance is important.

Watering

An established bermudagrass turf should be watered as needed. Irrigation is needed when leaf blades begin to fold up, to actually wilt, to turn blue-gray in color, or when footprints remain visible after walking on the grass. Apply ¾ to 1 inch of water per application. This will apply water to roughly the top 8 inches of soil, where the majority of the roots are. To

determine how much water a sprinkler system is providing, place several coffee cans throughout the irrigation zones to find out how long it takes to apply this amount of water. This is how long your irrigation system should run for each application. During prolonged droughts, bermudagrass may go dormant if it does not receive irrigation. The grass will turn brown and stop growing during this dormant period, but it will revive and resume growth upon irrigation with sufficient amounts of water.

Courtesy of http://turf.ufl.edu/