Bermuda

Bermuda grass is a medium to fine texture warm season turf. It is normally planted by using sod or sprigs, but some varieties can be seeded but are usually less in visual quality than those vegetatively planted. Bermuda grass spreads by rhizomes and stolons and can be aggressive in the landscape. It has excellent heat and drought tolerance, excellent salt tolerance, but does poorly in shaded situations.

Bermuda grass is one of the most widely used turfs in for residential lawns as well as for parks, athletic fields and golf courses. It has high wear resistance and recovers quickly from damage. Improved hybrid type bermuda grasses can produce a very high-quality lawn and or athletic field.

Bermuda grass typically requires about 3-3.5 lbs. nitrogen per year for residential uses. Athletic related turfs may require more fertility to keep a full lush turf, with minimal damage.

Mowing should be about 1”-2.5” for residential or commercial lawns. Begin the growing season at the lowest possible height. As the grass grows rapidly in late spring and summer the mowing height will need to be raised to keep from scalping the lawn. Probably every 4-6 weeks depending on environmental conditions and fertility levels. If mowing frequency is increased you may eliminate the need to raise the cutting height, or at least slow down the need.

Athletic surfaces will be maintained at lower heights and typically cut with a reel mower.

Bermuda grass goes dormant during the late fall and winter months and does not require mowing at this time. Scalping, or cutting at the lowest possible setting in late winter/early spring will remove dead/dormant leaf growth and allow for quicker spring green up. Be sure to remove the abundance of clippings generated during the scalping process. Scalping done in two or three different mowing’s, by lowering the cutting height a little each time lessens the need to remove an abundance of clippings.
Irrigation for bermuda grass should be applied as with most turf grass to achieve about 1” of equivalent rainfall per week during the growing season. Bermuda grass is drought tolerant, but will achieve best result with adequate moisture.

If the turf is poorly managed, thatch may occur. Thatch is an accumulation of living and dead organic matter just above the soil surface. This layer if it becomes too thick prevents movement of water to the root system. If you are following proper maintenance procedures, thatch should not be a problem.

As with most turfs, weed control is best accomplished with a combination of preemergent and post emergent herbicides. Annual weeds are best control with preemergent products and are normally applied two times in spring and two times in fall.

If any renovation of bermuda is needed, the best time to do so is early spring as green up begins.

Common bermuda grass is typically established by seeding. Following recommended seed rates for the type chosen. Soil preparation is critical for good growth. Hybrid types are typically established by sprigging, plugging or sodding. Again, soil prep is critical for good growth. Varieties of improved common bermuda include Mirage, Sahara, Blackjack, Riveria, LaPaloma and Yuma for seeded types. Princess is the best seeded type reaching the closest in quality to hybrid vegetative forms. Hybrid types include Tifway or Tifton 419, Tifway 2, Tifsport, and TifGrand and others.

**Tifton 419** is the most popular form of bermuda grass. It has darker color and stiffer leaves than most varieties and is also the most frost resistant. Thus, it remains greener longer in the fall and is quicker to green up in the spring. Used for lawns, golf fairways, athletic fields and other areas.

**Tifsport**- tolerates lower mowing and is denser than Tifton 419, thus making it ideal for athletic uses. It has superior cold tolerance and good density and texture.

**TifGrand** -is a new release that is supposed to be shade tolerant and requires less nitrogen. Seems to be more resistant to spring dead spot. It is fine textured and maintains dark green leaf color under low fertility programs.

**Tifway II**- is a dense, frost tolerant turf with better shoot density than Tifway.

**TifTuf**- fine texture, bright green color, recovers well from injury. Very drought tolerant. Requires less water than other varieties. Recommended mowing height is 1-1 ½ “

**Midway, Midiron, Midlawn, Midfield** are cultivars release by the Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station for their improved cold tolerance. They are medium textured and have few seed heads.

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