

The Establishment and Maintenance of Bermudagrass from Seed



SEED: Bermudagrass seed is available in several forms - hulled, unhulled and coated. Unhulled seed is the natural seed form, which will germinate in 7–14 days. Hulled seed has had the outer skin (hull) removed for faster germination, 4–7 days to germinate. Coated seed has been pelleted with clay containing nutrients to improve ease of planting and establishment, germination in 5–10 days. In all 3 forms, minimum germination of quality seed is 80%, with seed counts ranging from 1–2 million seeds per pound.

SOIL PREPARATION: Remove old turf and weeds. Do not plow these under as they take too long to decompose. If soil is light and sandy, add sterilized manure or a composted mulch material to the top few inches of soil. If soil is heavy or clay, add gypsum or lime (ask your local nursery for advice and application rates for your area) to the soil and mix in well with some mulch and sand. Cultivate your soil to a depth of 6 inches, incorporating lime, any organic soil amendments and preplant fertilizers as needed or based on soil tests. Prepare a medium-fine, firm seedbed - using a light roller on the finished seedbed is beneficial to level and firm the area.

SEEDING AND IRRIGATION: Bermudagrass seed should be planted in late spring or early summer when night time temperatures are consistently above 65 deg F (18 deg C). Plant 2–3 pounds of hulled seed, or 3–5 pounds of unhulled seed, or 3 pounds of coated seed per 1000 square feet of lawn. Sow half of the seed in one direction, and the other half at right angles to the first half. Rake the seed in lightly, covering no more than 1/8 inch with pulverized manure, peat moss or another fine soil material and then firm the seedbed. Apply water evenly and with a fine spray in order not to disturb the newly planted seed. Keep the soil continually moist for 10–14 days or until the new lawn is well sprouted and has had a chance to get established. After the seedlings are well established, start reducing the frequency of watering, while increasing the amount of water applied to encourage deep root growth. Once fully established, properly maintained bermudagrass turf will use far less water than many other turfgrass species.

FERTILIZATION: Only fertilize the young lawn if the early growth is weak or yellow. Approximately four weeks after seeding, apply a complete, balanced fertilizer to the newly established turf area. For faster coverage during the establishment year, a rate of 1-1/2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet is recommended every month during the growing season. Bermudagrass responds well to regular applications of nitrogen. Consult your fertilizer dealer for specific recommendations.

MOWING MAINTENANCE: NO SPECIAL MOWER IS NEEDED FOR THIS PREMIUM BERMUDAGRASS PRODUCT. Results are best when blades are kept sharp. Recommended mowing height is 1/2 to 1-1/2 inches. Don't mow the new lawn until it is at least two inches high and make sure that the mower is especially sharp for this first cutting to reduce damage to the young grass. The first 2 or 3 cuttings should not be shorter than 1-1/2 inches. Subsequent cuttings should be about 3/4 of an inch to promote the best growth possible, although bermuda can be kept at a 2" height with satisfactory results. Grass clippings can generally be left on the grass, as long as they are not excessive - they will decompose and add nutrients to the root zone.

PEST AND WEED CONTROL: Several weed control products are labeled for bermudagrass turf during establishment, as well as for later maintenance. Occasionally bermudagrass turf can suffer minor damage from turf diseases and insect pests. Overall, well maintained seeded bermuda turf is resistant or tolerant to most turf insects and diseases. This environmentally friendly turf species requires few chemicals for good growth. Consult your local extension office or turf chemical dealer for appropriate control recommendations in your area.

WINTER OVERSEEDING:

In temperate and transition growing regions, both seeded and vegetative bermudagrass turf goes dormant during winter, turning brown until warm temperatures return the following spring. Winter overseeding with cool climate turf species is generally not recommended on a newly established bermudagrass turf. If you must overseed your new stands of bermuda, then plant the ryegrass at half the normal seeding rate. Too heavy of a seed rate application or too invasive of preparation method can severely damage any bermuda stand, especially a newly established stand. On mature healthy bermudagrass, a fall overseeding application of perennial ryegrass seed such as Champion®, Playmate or Magnum can produce good results. Due to the density of bermuda turf, the ryegrass seeds must be raked in well for good soil contact.

ANNUAL SPRING / SUMMER BERMUDA OVERSEED:

To improve your bermudagrass stand and for better transition results each year, an annual light seeding with a Certified Turf Type Bermudagrass is recommended in late spring/early summer. Please ask for the Seed Research of Oregon detailed sheet on this procedure.

Seedlings



Bermudagrass – 5 days after planting



Bermudagrass – 3 weeks



Seedling – 3 weeks