

RESEARCH LABORATORY TECHNICAL REPORT



Bermudagrass Maintenance

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Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) is a warm-season turf that spreads by rhizomes and stolons. It is a durable grass that exhibits good wear and drought tolerance. Several varieties of Bermuda are available and selection should depend on the intended use and growing conditions.

A healthy lawn requires a comprehensive maintenance program that includes regular mowing, irrigation, fertilization, as well as pest and weed management. The program outlined in this document should be used as a guide and can be adjusted to meet client expectations. Note that weather and other factors can create unexpected problems even with the best of care. Routine monitoring and communication between the client and lawn care provider are important.



Cultural Preference/Tolerance

Shade Tolerance: Very Poor

Heat Tolerance: Very Good

Cold Tolerance: Very Poor

Drought Tolerance: Excellent

Wear Tolerance: Excellent

Mowing

Regular mowing at the proper height is important for optimum turf vitality. Bermuda is a fast growing turf that prefers a mowing height of 0.75-1.5 inches. A mowing height below 0.75 inch for common bermudagrass can damage the plant's stolons causing the turf to thin out and become more susceptible to diseases and insect pests. A thin turf is also more prone to weed invasion.

Aeration

Core aeration is beneficial to Bermuda turf. Aeration aids in thatch decomposition, reduces soil compaction, and improves water and air movement in the soil. Aeration should be done May through July when the grass is actively growing.

Irrigation

Although Bermuda exhibits excellent drought tolerance, 1 inch of water per week is needed to maintain health. Irrigation should be monitored and adjusted weekly based on rainfall to ensure that the correct amount of water is applied. Supplemental irrigation is usually not needed until the turf begins to show drought symptoms such as wilted leaves or footprints that remain after walking. Turf in full sun may require more frequent irrigation to prevent the onset of stress during dry periods.

Fertility

Bermuda should be fertilized and soil reaction (pH) adjusted based on a soil test report. Bermuda requires approximately 4.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year to maintain health. Fertilizer applications should begin in April after spring green up and continue through September at the rate of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Do not apply nitrogen after late August. Maintain soil pH between 5.5 and 6.5 through applications of lime or sulfur.

Diseases and Pests

Diseases that may affect Bermuda include: large patch, dollar spot, and spring dead spot. Insect pests that may affect Bermuda include: chinch bug, mole cricket, and grubs. Monitor turf weekly for onset of disease and insect infestations. Treat diseases preventively and implement insect management treatments when the pest is first detected.

Weed Management

Weeds are a constant threat to turf health because they compete for sunlight, nutrients, and water. Effective weed control can be achieved with a combination of pre- and post-emergent herbicides. Apply pre-emergent herbicides in late September and late February to prevent the germination of seeds of both broadleaf and grassy weeds (annual bluegrass). Spot treatments with a post emergent herbicide are effective for weed suppression during the growing season.



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