

PLANT HEALTH CARE REPORT



Centipedegrass

Centipedegrass (*Eremochloa ophiuroides*) is a low maintenance, warm-season turfgrass that spreads by stolons, aboveground running stems. Centipedegrass is often called the “lazy man’s grass” due to its minimal maintenance requirements. Although centipedegrass does not have the texture and color of other grasses, such as zoysia or bermudagrass turfs, its dense growth and easy maintenance make it ideal for many home lawns.



Photo courtesy of Michael Rivera
University of Georgia, Research
and Education Garden

A healthy lawn requires a comprehensive maintenance program that includes regular mowing, irrigation, fertilization, and disease and pest management. Weather and environmental factors can create unexpected problems even with the best of care. Routine monitoring is critical. Centipedegrass tolerances for factors are rated below.

1. **Shade:** Fair
2. **Heat:** Good
3. **Cold:** Poor
4. **Drought:** Good
5. **Wear:** Poor

Regular mowing at the proper height is important for optimum turf vigor. Centipedegrass is a slow-growing grass that prefers a mowing height of 1 to 1½”. A lower mowing height can damage the plant’s stolons, causing the turf to



thin, increasing its susceptibility to diseases, insect pests, and weeds.

Although centipedegrass exhibits good drought tolerance, 1” of water per week is needed to maintain optimum health, especially during summertime droughts. Irrigation should be monitored and adjusted on a weekly basis according to 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 drought symptoms.

In most areas, centipedegrass requires only ½ pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year to maintain optimum health. Nitrogen rates above 1 pound per 1,000 square feet may stress the turf and predispose the lawn to disease. This higher rate may be needed if rainfall exceeds average or on deep sandy soils where leaching is a concern. Fertilizer applications should be made starting in late May through late July (or when the turf is actively growing) at a rate of ¼ pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Apply other mineral nutrients as needed based on soil analysis. Maintain soil pH between 5 and 6 through applications of lime (raises pH) or sulfur (lowers pH).

The most common disease that may affect centipedegrass is large patch. Insect pests that may affect centipedegrass include chinch bug, mole cricket, and grubs. Monitor turf weekly for onset of disease and insect symptoms. Treat

Monitoring and Treatment Considerations for Centipedegrass

Late winter

Apply 1st treatment of pre-emergent herbicide. Sample soil for nutrient and pH levels. Make post-emergent herbicides on winter weeds when turf is dormant.

Early spring

Dethatch and aerate lawn if needed.

Late spring–early summer

Make 1st application of fertilizer after grass greens. Irrigate if needed. Begin mowing when lawn reaches 2” and gradually reduce to 1–1 ½”.

Mid–late summer

Make 2nd and/or 3rd applications (depending on soil type) of fertilizer 6 weeks apart. Monitor for chinch bug, mole cricket, grubs; treat as needed. Apply spot treatment herbicide directly to weeds. Irrigate if needed.

Early–mid-fall

If large patch was damaging last season, apply preventive fungicide. Apply 2nd treatment of pre-emergent herbicide for winter weeds. Apply non-nitrogen fertilizer and adjust pH according to soil analysis. Stop mowing when grass is dormant.

disease preventively and apply insect management programs when the pest is first detected.

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 (e.g. annual bluegrass). Spot treatments with a post-emergent herbicide can suppress weeds during the growing season, but are most effective on winter weeds.