

PLANT HEALTH CARE REPORT



Zoysiagrass

Zoysiagrass (*Zoysia* sp.) is a highly dense, warm-season turf that spreads by rhizomes (underground running stems) and stolons (aboveground running stems). It is primarily used in home lawns and exhibits good shade tolerance, so it is commonly grown where shade limits bermudagrass use.

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. Zoysia tolerances for factors are rated:

1. **Shade:** Good
2. **Heat:** Very good
3. **Cold:** Fair-good
4. **Drought:** Excellent
5. **Wear:** Good

Regular mowing at the proper height is important for optimum turf vigor. Zoysia is a slow-growing grass that prefers a mowing height of 1 to 3". A mowing height below ¾" can damage the stolons, causing the turf to thin and increasing its susceptibility to diseases, insect pests, and weeds.

Although Zoysia exhibits excellent drought tolerance, 1" of water per week is needed to maintain optimum health, especially during droughts in the summertime. 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.

Zoysia should be fertilized and the soil pH adjusted based on a soil analysis. Zoysia requires approximately 2–3 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year to maintain optimum health. Fertilizer applications should begin in late May after the grass turns green and continue through August at a rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application. Do not exceed 3 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year or apply nitrogen after late August. Maintain soil pH between 5.8 and 7 with applications of lime (raises pH) or sulfur (lowers pH).

Diseases that may affect Zoysia are large patch, dollar spot, rust, and Pythium root rot. Insect pests that may affect Zoysia include chinch bug, mole cricket, and grubs. Monitor turf weekly for onset of disease and insect symptoms. Treat disease preventively and apply insect management programs when the pest is first detected.

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 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.

Monitoring and Treatment Considerations for Zoysiagrass

Late winter

Apply 1st treatment of pre-emergent herbicide. Sample soil for nutrient and pH levels. Apply post-emergent herbicide for winter weeds.

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 before lawn reaches 1.5–2”.

Mid–late summer

Make 2nd and 3rd applications 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 diseases were 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.
