

# Lawn Grasses for Yavapai County at Elevations Above 3000 Ft

## Warm Season Grasses

### **Buffalo Grass**

Buffalo grass is native to the high prairie and is found from Northern Texas, New Mexico, and up and into the Dakotas. The University of Nebraska released a female type sold as sod, called "OASIS" (NE609). Texas A&M University released a female type called "PRAIRIE". Seeded types are used as multipurpose grasses. These include Sharps 'improved', 'Texoda', 'Bison', and Cody.

Description: produces male and female plants; low growing (8-10" high); spreads by above ground stolons; hairy leaf margins.

- Seed at 1.5 to 2.0 lbs of seed per 1000 square ft in June or early July. May also sod at this time.
- Mow at 2.5 to 3.5 inches with a rotary mower.
- Add N at low rates, not to exceed 1.0 lb of N per 1000 square ft in one year. Apply 0.5 lb in June and 0.5 lb in July.
- Will be dormant (brown color) from November to early May. Don't over-seed with ryegrass for winter cover.
- Uses less water than Kentucky blue grass in the summer. Summer dormancy (yellowing) can be induced if no irrigation is provided.

### **Bermuda Grass**

Used sparingly in the Prescott area. Being a warm season grass, it grows actively in June, July, August, and part of September.

Description: spreads by stolons and rhizomes; forms a thick mat; deep roots; very invasive. Size of leaf blade and leaf texture differs on common and hybrid grasses.

- Establish with seed, sod, or sprigs. Many varieties are available as sod or sprigs only.
- Must establish in June, regardless of the method of propagation.

### **Zoisia Grass**

Zoisia is not widely used in the Prescott area. It is slow to establish, but is more tolerant of shade than Bermuda grass. Some cold-hardy cultivars are available.

Description: leaf blades are borne at right angles to the stalk; has rhizomes and stolons; becomes thatchy and puffy with time.

- Establish with "dormant treated" seed or sod (sod not available in Arizona). "Dormant treated seed" has an additive or receives a chilling treatment that overcomes seed dormancy.
- Does not tolerate over-seeding with ryegrass.
- Mow with sharp reel mower at 1.25 inches or with rotary mower at 1.5 to 2.0 inches.
- Fertilize in June with complete fertilizer (N-P-K).

## Cool Season Grasses

### **Kentucky Blue Grass**

For fine dense lawns, Kentucky blue grass (KBG) is the first choice. It does best in full sun, followed by partial shade. There are some varieties that are more tolerant to shade (Nugget, Glade). KBG is successfully used for home lawns and sports turfs.

Description: boat-shaped leaf tip; a pale line parallels both sides of the midrib; spreads by tillers and rhizomes, which can form a dense turf.

- Established easily from seed in late summer. Seeding rate is 1.0 to 1.5 lbs of seed per 1000 square ft-maximum. The fall is a much more successful time to seed than the spring (late April). Sod can be installed year round, but is most successful when done in the fall.



- Mow to 2.0 or 2.5 inches. Mow when the turf reaches 2.5 or 3.25 inches, respectively. Scalping is any lawn's worst enemy! Highly maintained KBG sports turfs can be mowed regularly to 1.0 to 1.25 inches. Again, mow the grass when it reaches either 1.5 or 1.75 inches, respectively.
- KBG responds to nitrogen fertilizer best in the spring (April and May), and in the fall (October). Avoid nitrogen in June, July, and August. 1.0 lb of nitrogen per 1000 square ft at these three times of the year will promote good growth of leaves, shoots, and roots.
- When necessary to remove thatch, dethatching should be done during the fall. Do not dethatch during the summer. Dethatch when the turf has 0.5 inch or more thatch.
- A thick KBG lawn requires little weed control. A pre-emergent herbicide applied in mid-March or early April will prevent germination of weed seeds (like crabgrass).

### **Tall Fescue**

Tall fescue is a cool season bunch grass with a coarser texture and deeper roots than KBG or ryegrass. Being a bunch grass, it does not spread and rarely produces thatch.

Description: top surface of the leaf blade is ribbed; underside is smooth and shiny.

- Easily established by seed. Seed in the late summer at 7 to 9 lbs per 1000 square ft. Sod can be installed, but there really is no advantage over seeding.
- Produces only tillers, so may appear clumpy if seeded at too low a seeding rate or thin, weak, and spindly if seeded too heavily.
- Mowed best with a rotary mower at 2.25 to 3.25 inches. Do not remove more than one-third of the vegetation at any one mowing.
- Fertilize in late spring and again in the fall. Fertilize with up to 1.0 lb of N per 1000 square ft in April, May, and again in late September and/or October. Do not fertilize with N during the summer stress period.
- Around October 1, decrease the mowing height by 0.5 inch. Do this for the remainder of the fall. This allows the grass to make more tillers. Remember, do not mow more than one-third of the vegetation off. Come spring, raise the mowing height back up 0.5 inch again and leave it there until the next fall.

- A late winter application of a pre-emergence chemical will help prevent unwanted weeds, such as crabgrass.

### **Perennial Ryegrass**

Perennial ryegrass is sometimes included in seed mixes with KBG to provide a quick cover. Turf type perennial ryegrass is quick to germinate and forms a dense turf. Ryegrass fades in summer. This grass is shade tolerant only for a short time (1 year). During the early spring and cool fall seasons, perennial ryegrass is very wear-hardy, and is used in sports turf overseedings.

Description: narrow leaf blade with lots of fine veins; mid-vein is obscure but visible; underside of the leaf is shiny and smooth; produces only tillers, so may appear clumpy if seeded at too low a seeding rate or thin, weak, and spindly if seeded too heavily.

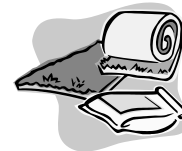
- Usually used as a mixture with KBG
- If planted alone, plant at 6 to -7 lbs of seed per 1000 square ft in late summer, early fall.
- Fertilize same as tall fescue.
- Little if any thatch is produced.

### **Fine Fescue**

Fine fescue includes several species of turf-type fine fescues. The most prominent one being creeping red fescue. Short "creeping" rhizomes help red fescue fill in. Fine fescues are the most shade tolerant of the cool season grasses. They are mixed with KBG. In this way, red fescue persists in the shade while KBG persists in full sun.

Description: fine or needle-like leaves; mature leaves are folded.

- Usually included in seed mixture with KBG.
- If seeded alone (not recommended, unless heavy shade), seed in the late summer at 7 to 10 lbs of seed per 1000 square ft.
- If used in the KBG seed mixture, mow and fertilize same as KBG.
- If used alone (for heavily shaded areas), mow at 2.75 to 3.0 inches with a rotary mower.
- If used alone, fertilize with 0.5 lbs of N per 1000 square ft in April, September, and October.



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<http://extension.arizona.edu/yavapai>

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