

# The Basics Of Bermuda Grass Maintenance

**Bermuda grass** was brought to America in the 1500's from Africa via the Spaniards. Common bermudagrass is drought resistant, grows on many soils, and makes a good turf if fertilized and mowed right. Common bermudagrass produces many unsightly seedheads, but in spite of this fault, it frequently is used on home lawns due to the ease and economy of establishment. Common Bermuda may be planted from either seed or sprigs and with intensive management will provide a high quality turf. However, the newer hybrid Bermudas are generally far superior.

**First mowing of the season:** after danger of hard freezes has passed, set your mower to lower than normal to remove as much dead top-growth as possible. Normally in mid-March when the soil temperature is around 55. Don't mow below 1/2" or you could damage the plant. Bag the clippings for this first mowing. Lawn will turn green when soil temperature warms to 60-65. Once the lawn has greened, mow at your normal height (2" for common and 1 — 1-1/2" for hybrids).

Never reduce the height of your lawn by more than one-third when mowing. Removing more than this can cause scalping and may take a long time to recover, during which, the grass is more susceptible to stress and further damage.

**WATERING:** By using a watering schedule (usually irrigation) to maintain your lawn, the highest degree of growth that can be obtained. Over watering can bring about fungus and invitations to insects. Lawns that are not highly maintained can use the drought tolerance of this grass to their advantage. In most average rainfall seasons little if any water may be needed. Although Bermuda grass is drought tolerant it does respond well to watering and fertilization if the desired density is not sufficient or if it is slower growing than usual during peak seasons.

**WEEDING:** This is an aggressive grass and can usually take care of weeds on its own once the sod is established and well managed. A regular mowing program helps control weeds.

**FERTILIZATION:** Although Bermuda grass generally requires lower amounts of fertilizer, usage will determine how much "fuel" this grass will need. Under intense wear, mowing and watering schedules more of the fertilizer will be used or leached into the soil. Bermuda grass used in average lawns and erosion control situations generally needs less fertilizer.