SS AGR 264

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Bermudagrass: A Quick Reference[1]

Yoana C. Newman[2]

In Florida, bermudagrass is the second most planted warm-season perennial improved grass. Most of the bermudagrasses planted in the state are hybrids that grow from late spring to early fall. These hybrids are responsive to good and balanced fertilization producing high yields (5-9 tons/acre/year). Producers are attracted to bermudagrass because of its high yield, persistence and good adaptation under grazing. Some seeded types also have good yields but none so high as the hybrids.

Origin

Native to Africa.

Use

Grazing and haying.

Description

Prostrate or decumbent growth (sod type) that develops to 1 to 2 feet tall

Adaptation

pH: 5.5 to 7.5.

Soil: Sandy loam, fertile, high fertility; sand to Clay. Best suited to well drained sites.

Rainfall: High moisture and rain but does not do well on poorly drained soils. Drought tolerant.

Climate: Subtropical and humid temperate regions; coastal plains.

Management Practices

Planting date: March (if irrigated); best during rainy season (June-August)

Planting rate:

Sprigged: 30-40 bushel/acre, approx. 1 round bale/acre or 16 square bales/acre
(1 square bale, 60 lbs= 3 bushels of sprigs; assuming 1 bushel= 20 lb sprigs)
Seeded: 10-15 lb/acre; 20 lb/acre (if using coated seed).

1. This document is SS AGR 264, one of a series of the Agronomy Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date January 2008. Visit the EDIS Web Site at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

2. Yoana C. Newman, assistant professor, Agronomy Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

Planting depth: 2-3 inches (sprigs); 1/4 – 3/4 inch (seeds)

Fertilization

Planting: As soon as plants have emerged (7-10 days after planting) apply 30 lb N/acre, all phosphorus (P_20_5) and 50% of potassium (K_20) recommended in soil test. Thirty to 40 days later apply rest of the potassium, plus 70 lbN/acre.

Grazing:

Under moderate management: 140-160 lb N/acre/year, split applied in 2 applications. Apply 80 lb N/acre in spring, plus all phosphorus P_20_5) recommended by soil test and half of potassium (K_20) recommended in soil test. Mid season, apply another 60-80 lb N/acre plus second half of potassium recommended by soil test.

Under intensive management: 200 lb N/acre/year, split applied in 3 applications. In first application, apply 80 lb N/acre, plus all phosphorus (P_20_5) /acre/year, and half of the potassium (K_20)/acre/year. Mid season, apply another 50 lb N/acre only. Mid to late September, apply the last 70 lb N/acre plus the second half of potassium recommended by soil test.

Hay:80 lb N/acre/cut + all phosphorus (P_20_5), and all potassium (K_20) in early spring. After each cutting, apply 80 lb N plus 40 lb of K_20. Apply fertilizer up to 6 weeks prior to end of season.

Pre-conditioning of vegetative stems for planting: At beginning of rainy season apply 100-50-100 lb/acre N-P_2O_5-K_2O + 2 lb/acre of micronutrients. Let top growth grow for 3 months, and 3 weeks before cutting apply 50 lb N/acre to promote growing points (buds).

Broad-leaf Weed Control[3]

If sprigging: 2,4-D, and diuron 4L can be used prior to emergence of sprigged bermudagrass. If diuron 4L is applied after sprigs have emerged, bermudagrass injury will occur.

If planting tops: Seven to 10 days after planting apply 2,4-D (several brands), Banvel, Clarity or Vanquish (dicamba); or weedmaster (2,4-D + dicamba).

Pests and control[3]

Fall army worms. Insecticides and basic treatments:

Malathion 57%EC: 2 pints/acre. No restrictions for grazing or harvest.

Sevin XLR: 1-1.5 quarts/acre. Restrictions: 14-days before grazing/harvest occur. No more than 2 applications per year.

Lannate: 3/4 quarts to 3 pints/acre. Restrictions: 7-day before grazing occurs; 3-day before harvest occurs. No more than 4 applications per year.

Dimilin 2L: 2 oz/acre. Do not exceed 6 oz/acre/year.

Additional Notes:

3. Check with county agent or extension weed specialist for updates on rates and restrictions.

Table 1.

Bermudagrass Hybrid	*Winter Survival*	*Rhizomes*	*Rust*	*Digestibility*	*Protein*
Tifton 85 *	3.5	Some	N	1	1
Tifton 44 *	1	V many	N	4	3
Jiggs *†	1	na	Y	6	5
Russell *†	2	V many	N	6	na
Coastal *	3	Many	N	6	3
Florakirk (Callie hybrid)	4	na	Y	3	3
Alicia ‡	3.5	V many	Y	9	3

Ratings: 1 = best, 9 = poorest (adapted from Glen Burton, Univ. of Georgia). na= not available information
* Adaptation or potential for north end in north-central Florida.
†= Information is not available for north-central Florida.
‡= Not recommended due to low quality, lack of cold tolerance, and susceptibility to rust.