

Video of the Week: [When is Watermelon Ripe on the Vine](#)

TURFGRASS

Recommended Tall Fescue Cultivars



Though several cool-season grasses are grown in Kansas, tall fescue is considered the best adapted and is recommended for home lawns. The cultivar K-31 is the old standby and has been used for years. However, there is a myriad of newer cultivars that have improved color, density and a finer leaf texture. Most of these newer varieties are very close to one another in quality.

Each year we the National Turfgrass Evaluation Trial rates tall fescue varieties for color, greenup, quality and texture. Quality ratings are taken once a month from March through October. K-31 consistently rates at the bottom. The recommended cultivars were 3rd Millennium, Braveheart, Bullseye, Catalyst, Cochise, Corona, Escalade, Faith, Falcon V, Firecracker, Firenza, Jamboree, LS 1200, Monet, Mustang, Raptor II, Rambler SRP, RK5, Shenandoah III, Shenandoah Elite, Sidewinder, Spyder LS, Talladega, Turbo and Wolfpack II. There are a number of other cultivars that did not make this list but should do well in Kansas. Go to http://ntep.org/data/tf06/tf06_12-10f/tf0612ft04.txt . Any variety with a mean rating of 6.0 or above should be fine. K-31 has a rating of 4.1. Keep in mind that mixes of several varieties may allow you to take advantage of differing strengths. It is not necessary for mixes to contain only the varieties mentioned above.

Though K-31 may still be a good choice for large, open areas, the new cultivars will give better performance for those who desire a high-quality turf. (Ward Upham)

Kentucky Bluegrass Variety Selection for Cool-Season Lawns

Though Kentucky bluegrass is not as heat and drought tolerant as tall fescue and the warm-season grasses, it is commonly used in northeastern Kansas, where there is sufficient annual rainfall. It is also grown under irrigation in northwestern Kansas where the higher elevation allows for cooler summer night temperatures.



The following cultivars have performed well compared to other bluegrasses in this region. Use this list as a guide. Omission does not necessarily mean that a cultivar will not perform well. Recommended cultivars for high-quality lawns, where visual appearance is the prime concern, include Alexa II, Aura, Award, Bewitched, Barrister, Belissimo, Beyond, Diva, Everest, Everglade, Excursion, Ginney II, Granite, Impact, Midnight, NuChicago, NuGlade, NuDestiny, Rhapsody, Rhythm, Rugby, Skye, Solar Eclipse, STR 2485, Sudden Impact, Washington and Zifandel. Such lawns should receive 4 to 5 pounds nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year and would typically be irrigated during dry periods to prevent drought stress.

Cultivars that do relatively well under a low-maintenance program with limited watering often differ from those that do well under higher inputs. Good choices for low maintenance include Baron, Baronie, Caliber, Canterbury, Dragon, Eagleton, Envicta, Kenblue, North Star, and South Dakota. Instead of the 4 to 5 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year, low-maintenance program would include 1 to 2 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year. Obviously, a low-input lawn will not be as attractive as a higher-input lawn, but you can expect the cultivars listed above to look fairly good in the spring and fall, while going dormant in the summer. (Ward Upham)

For Seeding Success, Pay Attention to "Other Crop" on the Seed Label

LOT # L155M-9-TF-499			
PURE SEED	KIND	GERM	ORIGIN
24.95 %	2ND MILLENNIUM TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
19.83 %	FOCUS TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
19.78 %	OLYMPIC GOLD TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
19.65 %	APACHE 3 TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
14.84 %	BLADE RUNNER TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
0.00 %	OTHER CROP		
0.95 %	INERT MATTER		
0.00 %	WEED SEED		
NOXIOUS WEED: NONE FOUND		NET WT. 50 LBS TEST DATE: 1/2009	

Fall planting time is close at hand, so it's time to talk about grass seed. Many people have the idea that all grass seed is basically the same. Big mistake! Choosing quality seed is one of the most important steps in successfully planting or overseeding your lawn. If you don't know what to look for, you may be introducing

unwanted intruders into that new stand. In particular, we are concerned with seed contaminated with orchardgrass and/or rough bluegrass (also known by its Latin name, *Poa trivialis*, or *Poa triv* for short). These are both perennial grassy weeds that cannot be selectively controlled once they are in a lawn. Orchardgrass is a problem because it is faster growing and lighter green than our turfgrasses. It is a bunch grass and so doesn't spread, but infested areas are still unsightly due to small tufts of this species pockmarking the lawn. Rough bluegrass is fine-textured and forms circular patches in the lawn.

It blends in fairly well until summertime heat causes it to turn brown rapidly. If the rough bluegrass would just die in the heat, it would only be a temporary problem. Unfortunately, it usually just goes dormant, turning green again with cooler temperatures and rain.

Buying quality seed starts with knowing how to decipher the seed label. One of the most important things to look for is listed as "% other crop." "Other crop" refers to any species that is intentionally grown for some purpose. That would include turfgrasses (those species other than the one you are buying) and pasture grasses. Orchardgrass and rough bluegrass both are listed as "other crop" seed.

Seed labels are required by law to show the percentage (by weight) of "other crop" in the bag, but unless a species constitutes 5% or more, the label doesn't have to list each species by name.

How much "other crop" is too much? That's a difficult question to answer, but the tolerance is very low. It depends on what the "other crop" actually is, and the quality expectations of the buyer. In practice, "other crop" may refer to something relatively harmless, like a small amount of perennial ryegrass in a bag of tall fescue, or it may refer to something bad, like rough bluegrass or orchardgrass. The homeowner really has no easy way of knowing what the "other crop" is, although there are some hints. If it is something bad, less than ½ of 1% can ruin a bag of seed. Obviously, if your expectations are high for the area you are planting, you would want the "other crop" to be as close to zero as possible. Good quality seed will often have 0.01% "other crop" or less. (Ward Upham)

FRUIT

Fertilize Strawberries



An August application of nitrogen on spring-bearing strawberries is important in order to increase the number of strawberries produced next spring. Plenty of daylight and warm temperatures during June, July and August promotes the growth of new runner, or daughter, plants. As daylight hours dwindle and temperatures grow cooler in September and October, fruit buds for the next year's fruit crop develop. To get a good berry crop next spring, it is important for strawberry plants to be vigorous during this period of fruit bud development.

Nitrogen, applied mid August, will help promote fruit bud development. A general application rate is ½ to ¾ pound of actual nitrogen per 100 feet of row. The nitrogen may be in the form of a fertilizer mixture such as ammonium phosphate or 12-12-12, or in a fertilizer containing only nitrogen such as urea or ammonium nitrate. Some specific examples would include:

Iron + (11-0-0) at 6 pounds per 100 feet of row.

12-12-12 at 5.5 pounds per 100 feet of row.

Nitrate of Soda (16-0-0) at 4 pounds per 100 feet of row

Ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) at 3 pounds per 100 feet of row

Urea (46-0-0) at 1.5 pounds per 100 feet of row

On sandy soils, the rate may be increased by about a half. After spreading the fertilizer, sprinkle the area applying at least a half-inch of water to move the nitrogen into the strawberry root areas. (Ward Upham)

PESTS

What's The Buzz? Green June Beetles!



Just like Old Faithful erupts “on schedule” (well, on average, every 91 minutes), green June beetle flights predictably erupt in Kansas. So why are they worthy of comment? Because of their dark appearance, large size and the very audible buzz created by their wing beats, people often automatically become leery of their presence ---- the thinking being that these are bumble bees. Also, their rapid and erratic flights may result in accidental collisions, causing people to flee the area fearing that they will be stung. However, green June beetles are harmless ---- neither

capable of biting nor delivering a sting. Rather than reacting “in fear of,” take the opportunity to capture a few beetles and admire them for their beauty from top to bottom.

Green June beetles sometimes are victims of mistaken identity ----that of being Japanese beetles. Size-wise, green June beetles are “Goliaths” compared to Japanese beetle “Davids.” There are distinct differences in color/color patterns as well as the presence or absence of white setal tufts. Lastly, green June beetles do not damage flowers or foliage as do Japanese beetles.

Probably the only legitimate complaint against green June beetles is that they may cluster on ripened (especially overly-ripe) fruit, notably peaches and grapes. Timely picking/harvesting of those commodities will help to avoid this situation. (Bob Bauernfeind)

MISCELLANEOUS

Field Dodder

Field dodder (*Cuscuta campestris*) is a unique parasitic annual plant that also is known as strangleweed or devils' hair. It is composed of golden yellow "threads" that twine over other plants and attach themselves with short, suction-cup-like suckers that arise from the bottom of the dodder stems. These suckers penetrate the stems of host plants to obtain nourishment. Flowers are small, whitish, and 1/4 inch in diameter. They are produced from April to October and will produce a seedpod that is two-celled and four-seeded.

Because dodder is an annual, it must reproduce from seed. Plants present now will be killed by the first frost this fall. Seed may sprout in the spring or lie dormant for a number of years. Germination takes place in the soil, but roots die as soon as the



plant finds an acceptable host. After attachment, dodder lives completely off the host plant. A single dodder plant can spread by branching and attacking additional host plants.

Destroying the host plants can control dodder, but this may not be an acceptable solution for many people. Dodder cannot be destroyed by pulling it off the host plants because remaining stem pieces will continue to grow. Trifluralin (Preen, Miracle-Gro Garden Weed Preventer, Treflan, Hi-Yield Herbicide Granules Weed and Grass Stopper) is a preemergence herbicide that can be used for control if applied before the dodder seed germinates. Also, glyphosate (Round-up, Kleen-up, Killzall, etc.) is effective on dodder. However, glyphosate is nonselective and will kill whatever it hits, including the host plants. (Ward Upham)

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