

GRASS PLANTER: TWO MAJOR GRASS TYPES

(optional information provided on how to select the best grass for your lawn)



OBJECTIVE(S):

1. Educational Components

Each participant will be provided information about the two major divisions of grass types (warm and cool), some examples of each with emphasis upon warm season their germination times, and their light/temperature requirements. Discussion will be done regarding grass varieties better suited to Arkansas since Arkansas can include both types.

2. Activity

Participants will then select a grass seed and plant it in a pot that they can then decorate if so desired.

3. Take Away

Participants will take a planter of with grass seed with them to their room.

MATERIALS:

(Plan for 8-10 patients. Eight is supposed to be the maximum, but sometimes we get 10.)

_____ Pens

_____ Markers

GRASS PLANTER

MATERIALS: *(Continued)*

- _____ Dishpans for dirt (available in BRI supply cabinet)
- _____ Watering cans (2 available in BRI supply cabinet) or individual water bottles for patients to use
- _____ Name tags for patients (check BRI supply cabinet)
- _____ Example of completed project you're doing
- _____ An extra set of the patient project materials listed below in order for you to demonstrate the project
- _____ TWO completed presentation forms (1 to BRI and 1 mailed to Ext. office)
- _____ Your clean receipts for materials purchased (give to BRI therapists)

SPECIFIC ITEMS NEEDED

- Variety of fast growing grass seeds
- Potting mix
- Pots, or other containers such as Dollar Tree cereal bowls or small pails, clear CD cases, large sea shells, etc.
- Water
- Popsicle sticks or coffee stirrers to label the grass
- Coffee filter or small pebbles for each container
- Optional – Decorations/Glue
- Optional, plastic wrap and rubber band for each container to create a greenhouse effect

POWERPOINT OR PREZI OF PRESENTATION AVAILABLE? No

HANDOUTS: 1) *"Grass Types Comparison Chart"*
 2) *"Types of Warm Season Grasses"*

DURING CLASS:

(Variation can be found in "Eggshell Planter" lesson plan.)

1. Depending upon the specific variety, remind participants that grass grows at different speeds.
2. Have each person select a type of seed, if options are provided. Label a coffee stirrer or popsicle stick with the name of the seed selected.
3. Have each person select a pot. Place coffee filter on bottom or use small pebbles/broken pots to prevent loss of soil thru the drain hole and to prevent soil "drowning" (becoming excessively wet).
4. Fill pot with potting mix. Pack lightly.
5. Sprinkle the grass seeds on top of the potting mix. Zoysia seed only needs 1/8 to 1/4 inch soil coverage as light is required to hit the seed to cause germination! The seeds must have light to germinate properly and only shallow planting will allow this to occur.

GRASS PLANTER

DURING CLASS: *(Continued)*

6. Water gently in order to not wash the seeds away.
7. Place plastic wrap over top of pot of seeds, if desired. This will create a greenhouse effect and accelerate germination. Secure plastic wrap with rubber band.
8. Place on a sunny windowsill.
9. Wait and watch the grass grow in about 7-10 days.

MAINTENANCE:

Water when ground feels dry.

The first thing to sprout will be the cotyledons, or seed leaves, which provide the nourishment the plant needs until the first true leaves appear—the ones that look similar to the parent plant. When plants have grown to about 3 inches and have at least 2 sets of true leaves, they are ready to be transplanted into the ground.

INFORMATION/DESCRIPTION/FACTS

In early spring, especially in lawns that are not well maintained, it is common to see a yard with some green areas and some brown areas. This is due to a mixture of green cool season grass mixed in with still dormant warm season grass. In case you are curious, here is why you see grasses greening up at different times:

Cool season grass remains a light shade of green through winter and will start greening up and growing in early spring. These grasses will thrive in temperatures from 65 to 75 degrees.

However, warm season grass types emerge from dormancy in late spring and thrive in temperatures from 80 to 95 degrees. It is built into the plant's genetic structure to begin growth at specific soil temperatures.

All warm season grasses lose chlorophyll in the fall and turn from green to tan. Cool season grass types, however, will often remain a shade of green through the winter. Therefore, where the two different grass types exist, you will see the green and tan mixture from fall until early spring.

A well-planned and maintained lawn will often have a single type of grass. Whether it is a warm or cool season grass depends on the geographical location, climate zone adaptation of a specific grass variety and the personal choice of the owner. In certain situations, for example with southern Bermuda grass lawns, a lawn may purposely have both types to maintain color year around. However, in most cases where both types exist, it is a sign of a lawn that was let go for many years or due to encroachment from neighboring lawns.

The environmental conditions in which they can thrive are quite broad. Some grass types grow best in hot, drier climates while other types grow best in tropical regions. Arkansas is in an area known as the **Transition Zone** is so named because of the transition between cool season grasses and warm season grasses. There is no one grass type that best fits this area. Its winter temperatures can be too cold for some warm season grasses and too hot in the summer for some

INFORMATION/DESCRIPTION/FACTS *(Continued)*

cool season grasses. The exceptions are perennial ryegrass and zoysia grass. Both species are extremely well adapted here. However, tall fescue is probably the most popular cool season grass with Bermuda grass and zoysia grass being the most popular warm season grasses.

Numerous factors affect the speed of your grass growing -sunlight, water, nutrients and the degree the ground is packed. However, most grass seed germinated in about 7-10 days. Zoysia seed only needs 1/8 to 1/4 inch soil coverage as light is required to hit the seed to cause germination! The seeds must have light to germinate properly and only shallow planting will allow this to occur.

*****OPTIONAL---Selecting grass for your lawn*****

There are many different types of grasses available for your home lawn that have strengths and weaknesses. However, when choosing the best lawn variety, first select grasses that will thrive in your local environment and specific site conditions (sun, shade, etc.) From these choices, pick one that will best suit the needs of your whole family, including children, adults and pets. The most important factor to consider in selecting a lawn grass is its ability to survive the intended use of the yard. The first consideration is sunlight. Is there adequate sunlight in the garden space to support shade-intolerant varieties? The second big consideration is whether the local climate favors cool-season or warm-season turf varieties. You'll also have to consider whether you want to plant seed or purchase sod.

As an example, let's say you want to use a "tough" grass to accommodate an active sports playing family. The "toughest" grasses (considering only that characteristic) are the sports-turf grasses like common Bermuda, hybrid Bermuda or zoysia. These grasses have a trailing growth habit and handle heavy foot traffic better than cool-season grasses (like fescues). They also tend to fill in bare areas caused from heavy foot traffic or dog urine spots more quickly, and they have a higher salt tolerance (urine). Good choice right? Not so fast. These grasses grow very poorly in the shade. No matter how inherently tough these grasses are, they are simply unsuitable in shady areas. This is true whether the shade is due to trees, the sun's angle as seasons change, or compass location (north and east facing locations are cooler and more shaded than areas facing west or south). Furthermore, these varieties are only "tough" during their growing seasons: spring, summer, and fall. They go dormant (turn brown and do not grow) during cooler winter months. When grasses are in a dormant state, foot traffic can quickly wear a muddy path through the turf thatch.

Depending upon the specific variety, remind participants that grass grows at different speeds.

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Grass Types Comparison Chart

GRASS TYPE	LIGHT REQUIREMENTS	DROUGHT TOLERANCE	GROWING SEASON	GROWTH RATE	HEAVY FOOT TRAFFIC TOLERANCE	UNIQUE CARE REQUIREMENTS
Tall fescue*	Sun	Good	Year-round	Fast	Poor	For better fill-in properties, add 15% Kentucky Bluegrass.
Double-dwarf fescue	Sun; tolerates light shade	Good	Year-round	Slow	Poor	Not recommended for active play or large pets.
Hybrid Bermuda	Sun	Good	Warm season	Fast	Excellent	Not suitable for shaded areas.
St. Augustine	Tolerates shade	Good	Warm season	Moderate	Moderate	Very sensitive to chemical weed controls.
Kentucky Bluegrass*	Sun to semi-shade	Poor	Cool season	Moderate	Good	Avoid hot full-sun exposure.
Perennial ryegrass*	Sun			Fast	Good	Does not self-repair; plan to spot seed.
Zoysia grass	Sun	Good	Warm season		Excellent	Requires annual dethatching.

NOTE: Adapted from Scott Cohen, (n.d.), Lawn Comparison Chart. Retrieved April 21, 2018, from <https://www.landscapingnetwork.com/lawns/types.html>

TYPES OF WARM SEASON GRASSES



St. Augustine. Deep rooted, tough, and fast growing. Greatest attributes are shade and salt tolerance. Susceptible to many diseases and produces thick thatch layers if watered/fertilized heavy enough.



Zoysia. Attractive, drought resistant and resilient to wear. Often touted as a miracle grass, but it takes years to establish. Even though it requires little mowing, it is actually a high-maintenance turf. It has poor recuperation abilities and needs plenty of fertilization.



Bermuda. A nice home lawn because it can tolerate a very low mowing height, which is also a reason it is widely used on golf courses in the South. It spreads quickly by both stolons and rhizomes, which helps it to form a thick, dense turf. It is usually found in the south. Its maintenance requirements (fertilizing, watering, and mowing) are high. Drought and cold tolerant resistant to disease. Least shade tolerant of any warm season grass.



Bahia grass is a good all-purpose grass with excellent wear tolerance, disease and insect resistance and it grows well in infertile soils. It is considered drought tolerant because of its prolific rooting but can thin out over time and is not suitable for shady areas.