

Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivars

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Kentucky bluegrass is still the best turfgrass available for homelawns and many general turf areas in Michigan. There are many Kentucky bluegrass cultivars to choose from and they vary widely in their cultural requirements and disease susceptibility. For the high maintenance turfgrass areas, the better Kentucky bluegrass cultivars appear to be Touchdown, Majestic, Brunswick, Parade, Adelphi, Baron, Cheri and Victa. These cultivars have the best resistance to the three major diseases of Kentucky bluegrass, Helminthosporium melting out, Fusarium blight and stripe smut. Trying to grow other Kentucky bluegrass cultivars even though they may possess good agronomic characteristics is not practical because of their susceptibility to these diseases. Agronomic characteristics such as color, density, and mowability are important, but as we have seen with cultivars like Merion and Fylking, agronomic characteristics alone are not sufficient; cultivars must also possess disease resistance for a turf to have longevity.

One of the great misnomers over the past 50 years has been the idea that a turfgrass can be maintained as a monostand (one cultivar or species) forever. A Kentucky bluegrass turf can remain as a monostand anywhere from 1 year up to 20 years depending upon the care and treatment it receives. Those lawns which receive proper watering, proper fertilizing, where diseases and insects are controlled, and where some hand weeding, or the use of non-selective herbicides to remove perennial grasses such as quackgrass and tall fescue as soon as they are observed is practiced, will remain pure Kentucky bluegrass turfs the longest. If quackgrass and tall fescue are not immediately removed from a turf area after their establishment, they will eventually become a major component of that turfgrass community.

Even the best kept turf will someday have to be replaced. It is no different than the roofing on the house, carpeting inside the house, or even the paint which goes on the outside of the house. All of these things have to be replaced with time, so too does a turf. Unfortunately, too often in the past the general public has been led to believe that by simply watering and fertilizing a Kentucky bluegrass turf that it would remain forever. This is simply not going to happen.

To obtain maximum years out of a Kentucky bluegrass turf it should be mowed at a 2 to 3 inch mowing height, receive minimal irrigation and proper fertility. A good Kentucky bluegrass nitrogen fertility program for high maintenance turf areas should consist of between 3 and 4 lbs. of actual nitrogen per season. The majority of this nitrogen should be applied during the late spring through late fall in Michigan. This program consists of a late August or early September application followed by a dormant nitrogen application applied after the last mowing or when vertical plant growth stops. Light nitrogen applications should then be applied in early June, July and August. It should be remembered however, that the growing of grass is an art, and not a science, and if one is not willing to put in the time necessary to maintain a dense turf, it will quickly become a turfgrass community composed of many different species. Most Kentucky bluegrass turfs will have to be replaced within a 10 year period except for those cases, where excellent care is given a lawn including hand weeding.

Table A . Kentucky Bluegrass Variety I Evaluation

Relative Rank	Variety	Quality Rating* (1-best; 9-poorest) and Statistical Test**
1	Delta	2.3 A
2	A-20	2.7 AB
3	A-20-6	2.7 AB
4	Fylking	2.7 AB
5	Bonnieblue	3.0 ABC
6	Glade	3.0 ABC
7	Olymprisp	3.0 ABC
8	Delft	3.3 ABCD
9	Newport	3.3 ABCD
10	Nugget	3.3 ABCD
11	Adelphi	3.7 ABCD
12	Orna	3.7 ABCD
13	Park	3.7 ABCD
14	A-34	4.3 ABCDE
15	Baron	4.3 ABCDE
16	Cheri	4.3 ABCDE
17	Galaxy	4.3 ABCDE
18	Birka	4.7 BCDE
19	Plush	4.7 BCDE
20	Touchdown	5.0 CDEF
21	Majestic	5.3 DEF
22	Sydsport	5.3 DEF
23	Merion	6.3 EFG
24	Kimono	7.0 FG
25	Mosa	7.0 FG
26	Tivoli	7.0 FG
27	Gardi	7.7 G

* Date Evaluated: March 22, 1979
 Aspect of Quality Evaluated: Color
 Factors Affecting Quality: Snow Mold

LOCATION: East Lansing (F4)

**Varieties having the same letter are not significantly different.
 Mean separation by Duncan's MRT. $S_{\bar{x}} = 0.6115$

Table B. Kentucky Bluegrass Variety II Evaluation

Relative Rank	Variety	Quality Rating* (1-best; 9-poorest) and Statistical Test**
1	EVB 1916	2.7 A
2	EVB 5585	3.0 AB
3	Bristol	3.3 ABC
4	EVB 1939	3.7 ABCD
5	N - 1214	3.7 ABCD
6	Pennstar	4.0 ABCD
7	Campina	4.3 ABCDE
8	Entopper	4.3 ABCDE
9	EVB 532	4.3 ABCDE
10	EVB 2453	4.3 ABCDE
11	Victa	4.3 ABCDE
12	WW Ag 401	4.3 ABCDE
13	EVB 1942	4.7 ABCDE
14	EVB 2461	4.7 ABCDE
15	Windsor	4.7 ABCDE
16	EVB 1146	5.0 ABCDE
17	EVB 3702	5.0 ABCDE
18	WW Ag 436	5.0 ABCDE
19	EVB 2481	5.3 ABCDE
20	Merion	5.3 ABCDE
21	Entensa	5.7 BCDE
22	EVB D-56	5.7 BCDE
23	Vantage	5.7 BCDE
24	WW Ag 452	5.7 BCDE
25	WW Ag 463	6.0 CDE
26	EVB 3965	6.3 DE
27	Brunswick	7.0 E

* Date Evaluated: March 22, 1979

LOCATION: East Lansing (G4)

Aspect of Quality Evaluated: Color

Factors Affecting Quality: Snow Mold

**Varieties having the same letter are not significantly different.

Mean separation by Duncan's MRT. $S_{\bar{x}} = 0.8296$