

# THE BLUES

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Kentucky bluegrass is a species that exhibits a great range of genetic diversity. Kentucky bluegrass reproduces asexually, therefore the seed from a mother plant is essentially identical to the parent plant. Genetic diversity in Kentucky bluegrass for the end user is critical. Blends and mixtures containing genetically different Kentucky bluegrass varieties reduce the opportunity for an individual strength or weakness of a Kentucky bluegrass cultivar to express itself over time. therefore, single varieties of Kentucky bluegrass may not provide enough genetic elasticity against abiotic and biotic stresses during the growing season. Many distinct types of kentucky bluegrass have been released, and these varieties have been classified into 14 groups based upon growth and performance.

Blends and mixtures containing Kentucky bluegrass should include complimentary and compatible but different varieties for optimal long term turf performance. For example, a mixture of "Other" type (Allure), "Aggressive" type (Julius) and "Midnight" type (Midnight) Kentucky bluegrasses will provide broad genetic diversity for improved disease resistance and agronomic performance.

## Seeding

**Dates:** Spring and fall when soil temperatures are above 60 degrees F.

**Rates:** 2-3 lbs./1000 sq. ft. on new seedlings. 1-2 lbs./1000 sq. ft. on established turf.

**Depth:** sow at 1/4 to 1/2 inch. Generally, Kentucky bluegrass

is slower in germination than other cool-season grasses.

## Cultural Practices

**Soil preparation:** Prepare a firm seed bed, free of clods, sticks and vegetative debris.

Seed should be in contact with soil.

**Soil pH:** soil is best maintained at a neutral pH of 7.0. Of the cool-season turfgrass, Kentucky bluegrass is the most susceptible to variation in soil pH conditions.

**NPK requirement:** In the northern regions, 4-6 lbs. N/year.

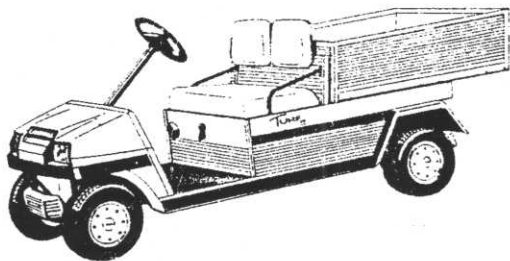
**Water use:** an ET rate of 7-8 mm per day places Kentucky bluegrass into the medium water use category for cool-season turfgrass.

**Mowing height:** Most Kentucky bluegrasses should be mowed at 0.75 to 2.0 inches, though some tolerate 0.5 inch mowing height under optimal growing conditions.

## A Thought to Ponder

On a recent visit to St. Andrews, Scotland, I picked up this little bit of history. In March 1897, the idea of a third course to relieve the pressure on the other courses came to fruition. Within a month the Town Council had an estimate from Mr. John Angus Jr. who undertook to lay out the course and have it ready for play in the current season. On 22nd June 1897 the 12 hole course was opened for play, coinciding with the day the town was celebrating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, after which the course was named. -- Steven A. Mann

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