

Question and Answer with Rutgers University

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Q: I am having a problem with annual bluegrass on my main football field. We have always had it in a few spots but this year it just took over the field and it died off about a month ago. Naturally everyone is in a tizzy over it because our field always looks good. I've heard you speak on the subject a few times so that is why I am reaching out to you. If there is any advice or literature you have and can send to me I would really appreciate it. I really need some help.

A: Currently, there are no practical chemical options to address annual bluegrass on football fields, particularly given the need to continually apply seed to the heaviest trafficked sections of the field (i.e. between the hash marks). Keep an eye out for the registration of Tenacity Herbicide for sports fields. It's currently available for sod farms and golf courses and will provide preemergence control of annual bluegrass AND allows some seeding flexibility.

In the meantime, I suggest seeding the sections of the annual bluegrass-collapsed sections of the field with perennial ryegrass. A gray leaf spot resistant blend of three to five varieties would be appropriate. Don't simply buy a 'Sports Turf Mix' - buy a blend of 100% perennial ryegrass. It's important to get these areas established with perennial turfgrass cover (i.e. perennial ryegrass) before the annual bluegrass re-encroaches (either from seed or from existing plants which have collapsed, formed a void, and appear 'dead'). Any targeted core aeration, core re-incorporation, and slit seeding of perennial ryegrass will aid in the establishment of perennial ryegrass in these locations. Try to seed at 8.0 to 10.0 lbs seed per 1000 sq

ft. As the football season continues, use a rotary spreader to apply more perennial ryegrass seed and allow the athletes to cleat-in the seed. You may even want to seed at the conclusion of the season.

Q: We are interested in receiving advice regarding a baseball infield that has been neglected for years. It is a dirt infield and we would like to put down a grass infield. Any suggestions on where to start?

A: Although not as aesthetically pleasing as a turfgrass infield, dirt infields are generally easier to maintain and, in most cases, are the most appropriate for municipal/parks and recreation facilities. Turfgrass infields, while appropriate for higher-maintenance facilities, often develop lips rather quickly due to mismanagement, a lack of management, or both.

Generally, neglected skin surfaces most benefit from lip renovation/removal and a management program that involves the elimination of high and low spots through routine grooming (without moving infield mix into nearby turf areas), attention to the pitcher's mound and home plate areas, and the avoidance of adding infield mix on an annual basis - which gradually raises the infield elevation relative to the surrounding areas.

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