

BERMUDAGRASS

(*Cynodon dactylon*)



Bermudagrass, sometimes called devil grass and wire grass, is an aggressive perennial, reproducing by seeds, by rooting at the joints of stolons (creeping stems), and by rooting from the extensive rhizome system (underground stems). Due to persistent "runners," Bermudagrass forms a dense sod mat.

A weed pest in lawns, fields, and waste places, especially on sandy soil, Bermudagrass was introduced from Eurasia, where it is a forage crop, sometime before 1807. It is a major pest and pasture plant in southern United States, and is extending its range northward where it is susceptible to winter killing.

It flowers and sheds seed throughout the summer months, being somewhat similar to crabgrass in this respect. Bermudagrass differs from crabgrass in having the much more persistent stolon and rhizome systems.

Stems are flattened, gray-green, short, smooth, and creeping, becoming erect near the tips, 6 to 18 inches tall. Leaves are flattened with a fringe of whitish hairs where the leaf blade joins the sheath (the part of the leaf that encloses the stem). Flowers are borne on 3 to 5 spikes that radiate from the end of a flattened stem. Spikelets (clusters of flowers) are pressed closely together on one side of the spike. Seeds, one in each flower, are about 1/20 inch long, oval, and orange-red in color. Rootstocks are hard, scaly, sharp-pointed, and spreading.

Selective control against Bermudagrass in turf has not been developed. Certain herbicides have proved moderately effective against this serious pest, if proper timing and repeated applications are used. They are: trichloroacetic acid (TCA), Vapam, and mylone. Soil fumigation with methyl bromide under an airtight cover eradicates Bermudagrass and allows reseeding within 48 hours.

Prepared in cooperation with Crops Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland.

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preventative program by making application before many mites have become adults. It is compatible with most insecticides and fungicides.

Combination Sprays

Phosphatic insecticides, as additions to oil sprays, are becoming widely used for insect control on trees and shrubs. Data from recent tests show that these combinations provide control equal or superior to the straight oil sprays while retaining the advantages and minimizing the disadvantages of both. In combination sprays the materials are used in concentrations approximately one half that when used alone. Combinations of ethion and insecticidal oils have given outstanding results under a variety of conditions.

Phytotoxicity

Plant injury caused by horticultural sprays has been observed in a few instances. Since injury occurs following application of some sprays to certain rose varieties and does not injure others, for example parathion, it is suggested that information on phytotoxicity be obtained from local sources such as county agents.

There is considerable evidence which indicates that plants growing under dry conditions are more susceptible to injury from sprays. In a number of instances the amount of plant injury observed correlated very well with the turgid condition of the foliage. Plants to be treated with pesticides should have ample soil moisture available several days prior to treatment.

Low Limbs Hurt Grass Growth

Although all grass needs light, it is often not necessary to remove trees to get enough light in shady areas, a scientist at North Carolina State College reports. Dr. John H. Harris recommends removing limbs up to a height of 10 feet or more to allow light to come through.

Various types of grass are suggested by Dr. Harris. Zoysia Matrella is preferred for light soil, Tiflawn and Tifgreen when the grass is to be planted in the spring, and red fescue or bluegrass when planted in fall.