

Bermudagrass: which variety is best?

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Bermudagrass is a popular turfgrass for a number of uses in the transition zone and points south. But which variety is best suited for use on fairways: Tifgreen 328 or Tifway 419?

The general consensus probably is that Tifway 419 is better for fairways than Tifgreen 328. In comparing characteristics—texture, mowing height and general uses—it is quite evident that Tifway 419 would be a logical choice for use on fairways.

Today, golf courses that have Tifgreen 328 fairways are quite successful, with very satisfied management. Tifgreen 328 will tolerate a closer cut than Tifway 419, therefore allowing a tighter lie of the ball.

Low handicappers would realize a challenge, where a high handicapper would experience total frustration.

One of the biggest advantages for having Tifgreen 328 from tee to green would be less chance for contamination of greens by trafficking of clippings from the fairways onto the greens.

Sod inventory would exist from the fairways and instant repairs could be made on tee tops when necessary. It is possible that areas on greens could, with all probability, be repaired with sod from the fairways, but it's highly unlikely that this might occur since the superintendent would want a greens-quality maintained sod.

Most of today's new golf courses are using Tifway 419 or the more improved Tifway 419 II for fairways. Again, in comparing the characteristics—texture, mowing height and uses—it is understandable why the choice for fairways is Tifway 419.

The possibility of contamination exists, but is probably unlikely because of the use of a buffer zone surrounding greens that allows for the cleaning of golf spikes before actually walking on the greens.

Tifway 419 and Tifgreen 328 have excellent regrowth and recovery from divots. However, Tifway 419 has a greater tolerance to traffic, therefore making Tifway 419 a more desirable choice for use on the fairway.

Actually, it boils down to one thing, and that is personal choice.

Tifgreen 328 bermudagrass - a warm season hybrid bermuda best suited for the warmer climates from the transition zone - South

Characteristics

1. low growing
2. rapidly spreading
3. disease-resistant hybrid
4. makes a dense weed-resistant turf

Texture

1. fine
2. makes excellent putting surface

Mowing Height

1. tolerates daily mowing at a height of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and overseeding with winter grass better than most bermudagrasses

Uses

1. been planted on more golf greens across the South and around the world than any other bermudagrass
2. been used on fairways, tees, and lawns; best considered for putting surfaces

Tifway 419 bermudagrass - a warm season hybrid bermuda best suited for the warmer climates from the transition zone - South.

Characteristics

1. darker green
2. requires less nitrogen to attain any degree of greenness.
3. makes a good dense weed-free sod
4. tolerates frost a little better and greens up early spring
5. tolerates golf cart traffic
6. more resistant to sod webworm and mole cricket attack than Tifgreen

Texture

1. possess stiffer leaves than Tifgreen
2. inferior to Tifgreen for use on putting surfaces

Mowing Height

1. mow weekly at a height of $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch for fairways

Uses

1. widely used on golf courses for fairways and tees; superior to other bermudagrasses
2. also well adapted and widely used on football fields, soccer fields and polo fields