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 * GEORGIA COASTAL PLAIN EXPERIMENT STATION *
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 * Information based on results of practical experiments in *
 * agriculture for press release and distribution to farmers *
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TIFTON 57 BERMUDA GRASS FOR LAWNS, ATHLETIC FIELDS, AND PARKS 1/

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Tifton 57 is an aggressive, disease-resistant hybrid Bermuda grass that has proven its superiority for lawn and turf purposes from Texas to the Atlantic and from Tennessee to Miami. This hybrid was developed co-operatively by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station. When compared with common cotton-patch Bermuda, or that grown from seed it:

1. Spreads faster and becomes established quicker after sprigging.
2. Makes a denser turf which means fewer weeds.
3. Tolerates more punishment and wear, making it better for football fields and playgrounds.
4. Stays green longer due to its greater disease and frost resistance.
5. Will be injured less by winter ryegrass and will recover faster when ryegrass goes out in the spring.
6. Requires less fertilizer.
7. Is shorter and looks better with infrequent mowing. (It should be mowed as often, however, to make high-quality turf.)

Like common Bermuda, Tifton 57 will not do well in shade and should not be planted in shady lawns. It can be grown under light shade if mowed less frequently and cut higher. It will also be as hard to keep out of flower beds, walk ways, gardens, etc., as the common type. Tifton 57 is very drought resistant and will do well on dry soils if properly fertilized. Like other Bermudas, Tifton 57 will suffer if not provided sufficient plant nutrients.

1/ Co-operative investigations at Tifton, Georgia, of the Division of Forage Crops and Diseases, U. S. D. A., the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, the U. S. G. A., and a number of Southern Golf Associations.

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Establishment

Since Tifton 57 produces few viable seeds, it must be propagated by planting sprigs. Observing the following recommendations will help to insure success with Tifton 57:

Prepare the sod as for planting a garden, applying lime if soil tests indicate its need. Broadcast 15 to 20 pounds of complete fertilizer, such as an 8-8-8, per 1000 square feet and work it into the soil thoroughly. Be sure to establish the grade and rake the surface until smooth.

When there is ample moisture in the soil, secure fresh sprigs of Tifton 57 and plant them as soon as possible. Do not let them wilt or dry out. One of the best planting methods consists of dropping the sprig and pushing the basal end into the soil with a thin 18" stick until only the tip leaves are left protruding. Then remove the stick and firm the soil around the sprig by stepping on it. Plant on 12-inch centers for rapid coverage. One bushel of sprigs, containing about 2,000 to 4,000 sprigs, should plant 2,000 to 4,000 square feet on 12-inch centers. If planted on 24-inch centers, it will plant four times this amount. Water after planting to insure maximum stands, although good stands can usually be had without watering if the above recommendations are followed.

Control weeds by hand weeding or mowing until the grass has covered the soil. Mow regularly at a height of one-half to three-fourths inch and fertilize liberally to thicken the sod and develop the most satisfactory turf.

Maintenance

Apply approximately 10 pounds of complete fertilizer such as an 8-8-8 per 1000 square feet in March each year. Follow with applications of three pounds of ammonium nitrate, six pounds of nitrate of soda, or 15 pounds of cottonseed meal or Milorganite per 1000 square feet at intervals of four to six weeks until the desired density and green color have been obtained. Use a fertilizer spreader or broadcast the fertilizer materials (as if they were seed) uniformly over the grass when it is dry. If applied properly, little burning should result from the application of these materials. To avoid burning, water immediately after applying the fertilizer to wash it off the leaves.

During the summer months, mow at one-half to three-fourths inch at weekly intervals to develop the best turf. Less frequent mowing in the spring and fall will be adequate. Do not remove clippings unless they are heavy enough to smother the grass.

A good maintenance program should give dense, weed-free turf. The presence of weeds and thin turf calls for more fertilizer, particularly nitrogen, and regular mowing.