

RECOMMENDED TURFGRASS CULTIVARS FOR CERTIFIED SOD PRODUCTION IN MARYLAND



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Numerous new turfgrass cultivars continue to be developed and released by turfgrass breeders. However, while many of these cultivars are adapted to the environmental conditions that prevail in other regions of the country, many are not adapted to the difficult environmental conditions that occur in the transition zone, which includes Maryland and Virginia. Thus, to identify cultivars that will perform well in this region, extensive cultivar trials are evaluated each year at the University of Maryland and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



The cultivar performance data obtained at various locations in Maryland and Virginia are reviewed annually in a joint meeting of university researchers and representatives of the Departments of Agriculture of both states. The use of recommended cultivars usually results in a turfgrass stand of higher quality and density, greater stress tolerance, lower nutrient requirements, less water usage, fewer pest problems and thus reduced pesticide use, greater water infiltration, and reduced runoff.

There has been extensive interest in recent years regarding turfgrass species that have reduced nutrient requirements, especially nitrogen. The two recommended turfgrasses with the lowest nitrogen requirements are the fine fescues and zoysiagrass, while turf-type tall fescue has intermediate requirements. Although Kentucky bluegrass and bermudagrass generally have the highest nitrogen requirements, research has identified several Kentucky bluegrass cultivars that provide fair quality under reduced nitrogen fertility and other maintenance inputs.

The following lists of recommended cultivars represent those that have been performing well in trials in both states over a period of at least 3-5 years. Please bear the following notations in mind as you review the lists:

Cultivars listed in green *italics* are considered promising, but have only been tested in Maryland or Virginia for 2 years or may be difficult to find due to limited seed availability.

Cultivars followed by a numerical notation may be removed from these lists in future years for the following reasons:

Cultivar¹ - May be removed from the list due to declining field performance relative to other cultivars

Cultivar² - may be removed from the list due to declining seed quality

Cultivar³ - may be removed from the list because certified seed has not been tested by either the Maryland or Virginia seed testing labs.

Cultivar⁴ - may be removed from the list due to the lack of current testing data relative to other cultivars. The cultivar will be removed from the list if it is not included in the next available cultivar trial.

KEY POINTS

Recommended cultivars have been evaluated for performance in Maryland and Virginia.

Maryland Certified Sod must contain only recommended cultivars.

Recommended cultivars provide better quality turf and improve ground cover.

The use of recommended cultivars reduces many pest and management problems.

Recommended cultivars often have lower fertilizer, water, and pesticide needs.

Use of recommended cultivars can enhance the environmental benefits of turfgrass.

The Maryland certified sod program is administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Rather than naming individual cultivars, many specifications require that certified sod of a particular turfgrass species be used.

Specifying certified sod guarantees that the sod will contain cultivars that are currently recommended by researchers in Maryland and Virginia, will have been seeded in recommended percentages, and will be of high quality (minimal insects, weeds, and diseases). Thus, the need for constantly updated specifications to reflect improvements in cultivars is greatly minimized. Listed below are the recommendations for zoysiagrass, bermudagrass, Kentucky bluegrass, turf-type tall fescue, and fine fescue sod.

Kentucky Bluegrass Sod

- A minimum of 3 recommended and promising Kentucky bluegrass cultivars must be chosen
- Each cultivar must range from a minimum of 10% to a maximum of 35% of the blend's weight.
- No more than 35% of the mixture may be comprised of promising cultivars.

Cultivar evaluation trials identify disease-prone cultivars



Leaf spot of Kentucky Bluegrass



Summer Patch of Kentucky Bluegrass

Recommended and Promising Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivars

<i>Alexa II</i>	<i>Emblem</i>	NuGlade
Apollo	Everglade ³	Princeton 105
<i>Aries</i>	Excursion	Quantum Leap
<i>Aura</i>	<i>Ginney II</i>	Raven
Award	<i>4- Season</i>	<i>Rhapsody</i>
<i>Barrister</i>	<i>Granite</i>	<i>Rhythm</i>
<i>Belissimo</i>	Impact	Skye
<i>Bewitched</i>	Juliet	<i>Solar Eclipse</i>
Beyond	Liberator	Sudden Impact
<i>Bluestone</i>	<i>LS 4000</i>	Touche
<i>Blue Tastic</i>	Midnight	<i>Wildhorse</i>
Brilliant	<i>Mystere</i>	Yankee
Courtyard	Nu Destiny	<i>Zinfandel</i>
Diva	<i>Nuchicago</i>	

Turf-Type Tall Fescue Sod

The following recommended and promising turf-type tall fescue cultivars may be seeded individually or in blends, and may be mixed with Kentucky bluegrass (see note below for percentages). Addition of Kentucky bluegrass may improve sod harvestability as well as improving overall performance and quality without increasing management inputs.

Recommended turf-type tall fescue cultivars:

Avenger	Forte	Raptor II
Biltmore ¹	Grande	Rebel Exeda
Bingo	Grande II	Rebel IV
Bravo	Greenkeeper WAF	Regiment II
Blackwatch	Guardian 21	Rendition
Cochise III ³	Hounddog 5	2nd Millennium
Constitution	Hunter	Spyder LS
Coyote II	Inferno	Taos
Crossfire II ⁴	Justice	Tarheel II
Davinci	Magellan	Tempest
Daytona	Masterpiece	3 rd Millennium SRP
Endeavor	Matador GT	Titanium
Faith	Monet	Tombstone
Falcon IV	Padre ¹	Turbo
Fidelity	Penn 1901	Watchdog
Firecracker LS	Raptor	Wolfpack

Promising turf-type tall fescue cultivars:

<i>Aggressor</i>	<i>Fat Cat</i>	<i>Shenandoah III</i>
<i>AST 7002</i>	<i>Finelawn Xpress</i>	<i>Sidewinder</i>
<i>AST 7003</i>	<i>Firenza</i>	<i>Skyline</i>
<i>AST 9002</i>	<i>Garrison</i>	<i>Speedway</i>
<i>AST 9003</i>	<i>Gazelle II</i>	<i>SR 8550</i>
<i>Barvado</i>	<i>Greenbrooks</i>	<i>SR 8600</i>
<i>Braveheart</i>	<i>Hemi</i>	<i>SR 8650</i>
<i>Bullseye</i>	<i>Hudson</i>	<i>Stetson II</i>
<i>Cannavaro</i>	<i>Jamboree</i>	<i>Tahoe II</i>
<i>Catelyst</i>	<i>Lindbergh</i>	<i>Talladega</i>
<i>Cezanne RZ</i>	<i>LS1200</i>	<i>Terrier</i>
<i>Cochise IV</i>	<i>Montana</i>	<i>Titanium LS</i>
<i>Compete</i>	<i>Mustang 4</i>	<i>Toccoa</i>
<i>Dakota</i>	<i>Pedigree</i>	<i>Traverse SRP</i>
<i>Einstein</i>	<i>Renovate</i>	<i>Trio</i>
<i>Escalade</i>	<i>Reunion</i>	<i>Tulsa Time</i>
<i>Essential</i>	<i>Rhambler SRP</i>	<i>Umbrella</i>
<i>Falcon NG</i>	<i>Rocket</i>	<i>Van Gogh</i>
<i>Falcon V</i>	<i>Shenandoah Elite</i>	<i>Wolfpack II</i>

Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivars Recommended for Mixing with Tall Fescue or Fine Fescue Sod

The following Kentucky bluegrass cultivars may be mixed with turf-type tall fescue or fine fescue to enhance sod strength during harvesting. A maximum of 10% Kentucky bluegrass by weight may be included with tall fescue.

Dura Blue, Thermal Blue, Thermal Blue Blaze, and all recommended Kentucky bluegrass cultivars.

Fine Fescue Sod

- The recommended and promising fine fescue cultivars may be used for the production of certified sod.
- No one cultivar may be more than 40% of the seed mixture by weight.
- Hard fescue cultivars must be 40-95% of the mixture by weight.
- Chewings, and creeping red fescue may be 0-40% of the mixture by weight.
- Promising cultivars may not compose more than 40% of the mixture by weight.
- Kentucky bluegrass must 5-20% of the mixture by weight.
- Kentucky bluegrasses must be selected from those eligible for mixing with tall fescue.
- Md. State Highway Administration will not accept sod with creeping red fescue.

Recommended Fine Fescue Cultivars

The following recommended fine fescue cultivars may be seeded individually or in blends.

Key to table, below:

R) = Strong Creeping Red Fescue, (C) = Chewings Fescue, (H) = Hard Fescue,

Berkshire (H)	<i>LaCross (C)</i>	<i>Spartan II (H)</i>
Chariot (H)	Longfellow II (C)	SR 5130 (C)
<i>Epic (R)</i>	Predator (H)	Wendy Jean (R)
Firefly (H)	7 Seas (C)	<i>Zodiac (C)</i>
Gotham (H)		

Note: See page 1 for explanation of superscripts and italics

Zoysiagrass Sod

Only fourteen cultivars are currently recommended in Maryland for certified sod production due to potential winter hardiness problems of other cultivars. The group listed as vegetative (v) cultivars can only be obtained as sod, plugs, or sprigs. The group listed as seeded may be obtained as seed (s) as well as in vegetative forms.

<i>Cavalier (v)</i>	<i>J-36 (s)</i>	<i>Zen 400 (s)</i>
<i>Compadre (s)</i>	<i>J-37 (s)</i>	<i>Zen 500 (s)</i>
<i>Companion (s)</i>	<i>Marquis (v)</i>	Zenith (s)
<i>Himeno (v)</i>	Meyer (v)	<i>Zorro (v)</i>
<i>J-14 (s)</i>	<i>Sunburst (v)</i>	

Note: See page 1 for explanation of superscripts and italics

Bermudagrass Sod

Eleven vegetatively (v) reproduced cultivars are currently recommended for use in Maryland for certified sod production. These can only be obtained as sod, plugs, or sprigs. Four cultivars that can also be seeded (s) are recommended as well. A prime characteristic in evaluating bermudagrasses for use in Maryland is winter hardiness (cold tolerance). Cultivars listed have improved winter hardiness, but may exhibit some damage in extreme years, particularly under low mowing heights.

Contessa (s)	Premier (v)	Tifton 10 (v)
Midfield (v)	Quickstand (v)	Tifsport (v)
Midiron (v)	Riviera (s)	Tufcote (v)
Midlawn (v)	Shanghai (v)	Vamont (v)
Patriot (v)	Sovereign (s)	Yukon (s)



Bermudagrass winter hardiness is a major consideration for cultivar recommendation.

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