

Choosing Grass Seed



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In Ohio, Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and fine fescue are recommended for lawns. Lawns with more than one species have greater genetic diversity which improves disease and insect resistance, plus offers better adaptation to differing environmental conditions. When establishing a lawn with only one species, blending two to four cultivars is recommended. Rhizomatous or tillering grasses spread by horizontal stem, while bunching grasses do not spread vegetatively. Endophytes are beneficial fungi that grow inside the grass plant, making it more resistant to insect attack and more tolerant of stress.

	Kentucky Bluegrass	Perennial Ryegrass	Fine Fescue	Tall Fescue
Species	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	<i>Festuca rubra</i> , <i>Festuca longifolia</i>	<i>Festuca arundinacea</i>
Germination	14-30 days	5-10 days	7-14 days	7-12 days
Seeding Rate per 1000 sq ft	2-3 lbs	5-6 lbs	5-6 lbs	7-10 lbs
Color	Dark green	Medium green	Medium to dark	Medium green
Blade Width	Medium	Medium	Fine	Medium-wide
Spreading	Rhizomatous	Bunching, tillering	Rhizomatous to bunching	Bunching, slight tillering
Winter Quality	Very good	Good	Good	Fair
Summer Quality	Fair unless watered	Good	Good	Excellent
Mowing Height	2 to 2½ inches	2 to 2½ inches	2 to 2½ inches	2½ to 3 inches
Watering	Irrigate in summer	Best if irrigated	Not necessary	Not necessary
Fertilizing	High fertility	High fertility	Low fertility	Low fertility
Insect Resistance	Somewhat	Endophytes	Endophytes	Endophytes
Disease Resistance	Good	Somewhat	Good	Good
Best Quality	Good appearance	Rapid establishment	Shade tolerant	Tough and drought-resistant

A mixture is a combination of different grass species, while a blend is a combination of different cultivars of the same species. The Federal Seed Act of 1936 mandates certain requirements of seed labeling. By law, all seed sold in Ohio must be labeled and include: Species and cultivar name (if a seed has no cultivar name, "Variety Not Stated" or "VNS" must be listed) of each seed component which exceeds five percent of the contents, and its percentage by weight; lot number; origin of the seed (may be "unknown"); percentage (by weight) of weed seeds; kind and quantity (by weight) of noxious weed seeds; percentage (by weight) of agricultural (crop) seed; percentage (by weight) of inert matter; germination percentage; percentage of hard (infertile) seeds; the month and year of the germination tests; and name and address of seller and manufacturers code.