

# Seeds for the Future

## Turf Technical Bulletin



### **Saving Water Long Term – Planting Seeded Bermudagrass**

Once established, warm-season grasses, including bermudagrass, will potentially use less water than cool-season species such as tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass or perennial ryegrass. However, bermudagrass, whether seeded or vegetative, must be established in late spring to summer. It will require more water than established cool-season turf during this grow-in period. Part of the water savings occurs during the winter when bermudagrass goes dormant and brown (which may not be acceptable for some uses).

#### **Total Conversion from Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass or Perennial ryegrass to Bermudagrass** *(most successful method)*

1. The original grass needs to be green, actively growing with soil temperatures at a minimum of 65°F (18°C), This typically occurs when air temperatures are above 80°F (27°C). Do not mow for 1 to 2 weeks.
2. Spray with Glyphosate at recommended rate.
3. Mow existing turf short and aerify if possible.
4. Add fertility based on soil test and correct any soil or drainage problems.
5. Drop seed or use slit seeder set no deeper than 1/8 inch at 2-3 lbs/1000 sq. ft (10-15 gr/sq. m.).
6. Cover with thin layer of topsoil or compost.
7. Irrigation should be applied to keep the surface evenly damp, not saturated *(short irrigations 4 to 6 times per day)*.
8. Germination will occur over 7 to 14 days depending on temperatures. As the cool season grass dies, the bermudagrass will become established so green cover is maintained.
9. Start reducing irrigation once good establishment is observed and initiate mowing at 0.5 to 1 inch.
10. Herbicides should be applied for weed control if necessary.
11. Apply 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. after emergence and monthly during grow in.

#### **Conversion without Glyphosate** *(less effective method)*

1. Let the cool season grass go dormant by not watering for 2 to 4 weeks *(make sure to apply some water to any trees in the turf area)*.
2. Mow existing stand very short and aerify if possible.
3. Follow steps 5 to 11 *(above)*, initiating mowing as soon as possible to reduce competition.
4. The cool season grass will recover so less bermudagrass will be present. Manage for warm season turf after the bermudagrass is mature.
5. Additional herbicides can be used to remove the cool season grass completely if desired. Use Metsulfuron during the growing season, and Glyphosate when the bermudagrass is dormant.

Once bermudagrass has been well established it will provide all the benefits of cool season turf including cooling, reducing dust and providing a strong playing surface while using less water. Uniform, efficient application of irrigation is required for optimal conservation. Bermudagrass is not suitable for heavily shaded sites, and only cultivars such as *Yukon* have adequate cold tolerance for more Northern sites.