

# Turfgrass Species Specifications and Maintenance

Taking good care of your lawn often requires no more work overall than taking poor care of it. A lawn that is properly mowed, fertilized and watered has far fewer problems with weeds, diseases and insects. A well kept lawn also remains dense/lush and attractive, providing you much more enjoyment and environmental benefits. All information is based on average/normal conditions; individual sites and situations may differ. Therefore, contact your local turfgrass sod producer or county Extension Office if more detailed information is needed.



## Tall Fescue

**Characteristics:** Cool-season grass - medium to dark green color, moderate density - more extensive root system than any other cool-season grass. Texture ranges from coarse to medium for newer turf-types. A bunch-type grass.

**Recommended Usage:** Very good transition zone grass - adapted to moderately cold winters and warm summers - good tough play lawn - recommended for a wide variety of uses, including residential and commercial landscapes, roadsides, parks, recreation areas, and sports fields.

**Temperature Tolerance:** Good heat tolerance for a cool-season grass - grows in a wide range of temperatures in the transitional climatic zone between cool and warm climates - less cold hardy than most cool-season grasses.

**Drought Resistance:** Good - one of the better cool-season turfgrasses, fairly deep root system helps avoid drought. Can go into summer dormancy, with brown leaves, when irrigation is withheld; upon return of moisture supply, will green up again. Some varieties have better tolerance to heat and drought.

**Shade Adaptation:** Good in transition zone - prefers full sun - moderately tolerant to partial shade. Of the cool-season grasses, only fine leafed fescues rank higher in shade adaptation.

**Wear Resistance:** Good - suitable for moderate recreation and foot traffic areas exhibiting good initial wear recovery, especially in spring and fall when growth is rapid.

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**Water Needs:** Moderate - apply 0.5 to 1 inch of water as a deep soaking every 3 to 7 days to encourage a deep, healthy root system during dry or hot periods. Avoid frequent, shallow watering that result in shallow roots, permitting weed germination and growth.

**Mowing & Thatching:** Optimum mowing height of 2 to 3 inches for a high quality lawn. Mow regularly with a sharp rotary or reel mower, allowing clippings from frequent mowing to remain on the lawn. Never remove more than 1/3 of the shoot growth at one mowing. Tall fescue forms very little thatch.

**Soil & Fertilizer Needs:** Adapts to a wide range of soil conditions - has rather deep extensive root system for a cool-season grass that makes excellent use of soil moisture and mineral nutrients - good tolerance to saline soil conditions. Fertilize twice a year, spring and fall, with a complete fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphate and potassium - apply N at 2 to 4 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. per year. Will respond well to high nitrogen applications to achieve a higher quality turf. Water thoroughly after fertilization.

**Disease, Weed & Insect Control:** Varieties are available that are resistant to net blotch, brown patch and crown rust. For weeds, chemical controls are most effective during fall and spring.