

SELECTING KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS VARIETIES FOR ATHLETIC FIELDS

<http://turfgrass.hort.iastate.edu/extension/blue.pdf>

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There are many good varieties to select from when choosing cool season grasses. Consider the strong and weak points of a particular variety on its own merit, but don't forget to consider how you intend to care for your specific areas. Aggressive and traffic tolerant bluegrass varieties sound good for sports turf, but when selecting varieties more consideration should be given to how you intend to use and manage a particular turf area. For example, aggressive varieties may not be the best choice on non-irrigated fields, instead use a low maintenance drought tolerant variety. The categories listed below will help you select the right grass for your specific needs. Another good source of information for grass selection is the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program nstep.org. NTEP specifically ranks grass variety performance in several areas, i.e. traffic tolerance, turf quality, color, summer performance, spring green-up, disease resistance, sod strength, and many others.

HIGH MAINTENANCE - Bluegrasses in this category have the highest level of performance when provided with frequent mowing, irrigation to prevent wilt, and good fertility (minimum 3 lbs N/1000 sq ft/yr).

LOW MAINTENANCE - Once established this group of bluegrass varieties has performed well in non-irrigated NTEP trials receiving 1-2 lbs N/1000 sq ft/yr. Bluegrasses in this category have a more open and upright growth habit, narrow blades, less density, and perform best at a cutting height of 2.5 inches or greater. Because of their susceptibility to leaf spot they often fade when disease pressure occurs. These cultivars are best adapted to high cutting heights in regions with cool nights, bright sun, and low humidity. They are sometimes used in low maintenance blends on non-irrigated fields. The single most important factor in selecting a bluegrass variety is irrigation. If you plan on limited watering or summer dormancy then select drought tolerant varieties from the low maintenance category.

AGGRESSIVE TYPES - These varieties produce dense growth and recover quickly from traffic. They generally produce more thatch than other bluegrass varieties and will require a routine core aeration program. During initial establishment, or when overseeding, use aggressive types in high traffic areas of football and soccer fields.

COMPACT TYPES - These bluegrass varieties have a low, compact growth habit and good resistance to leafspot. There are two additional groups within the compact types. The **Midnight types** are very dark green with long winter dormancy, late spring green up, and good turf quality and heat tolerance. The **America types** have finer leaf texture and higher density with moderate winter dormancy and recovery from summer stress. Compact types are especially useful for situations such as close cut baseball infields. With proper care and attention to watering these varieties can be routinely mowed at 0.75 inches with occasional tournament mowing at 0.5 inches.

SPRING AND WINTER TYPES - These varieties have good cool weather vigor. They green-up earlier in the spring and maintain good winter color. They are especially useful for late winter/early spring sports such as college baseball and high school soccer. They have medium density and growth habit. Seed head formation causes the **Bellevue Types** to become stemmy in late spring or early summer. The **CELA Types** (Challenger, Eclipse, Liberty, Adelphi types) are less stemmy than the Bellevue types.

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HIGH/MEDIUM MAINTENANCE	LOW MAINTENANCE	AGGRESSIVE TYPES	COMPACT TYPES	SPRING/WINTER TYPES
A-34*, Abbey, America*, Allure*, Apollo, Arcadia, Absolute, Award*, Banff, Baron, Blacksburg*, Blackstone, Brilliant, Challenger, Chateau, Chicago, Champagne*, Coventry*, Cynthia, Eclipse*, Explorer, Freedom II, Geronimo, Glade*, Impact, Indigo, Jefferson, Julia, Liberator, Limousine*, Merit, Midnight, Moonlight, Nassau*, North Star, NuGlade, Nugget, Odyssey*, Optigreen, Parade, Pick 8, Preakness, Princeton 105*, Quantum Leap, Ram I, Rambo*, Rita, Rugby II*, Serene*, SR2000, Showcase, Total Eclipse, Touchdown, Unique*, Wildwood	Alene, Argyle, Barblue, Barmax, Baron, Bartitia, Baritone, Bariris, Bronco, Caliber, Canterbury, Cynthia, Haga, Harmony, Monopoly, North Star, Ram I, SR2000, Unique, Washington Common Types Huntsville, Kenblue*, Park, South Dakota Cert.	Limousine*, North Star, Princeton 104*, Touchdown	Amazon*, Alpine, Award*, Blackstone, Blacksburg, Conni, Glade*, Indigo, Moonlight, Nugget, Plantini, Princeton P105*, Ram I, SR2100, Wildwood Midnight Types Arcadia, Absoloute, Award*, Impact, Midnight, NuGlade, Odyssey, Quantum Leap, Rugby II, Total Eclipse America Types Apollo, America*, Brilliant*, Langara, Showcase, Unique*	Bellevue Type Classic*, Freedom, Haga, Suffolk CELA Type Challenger, Eclipse*, Jefferson, Liberty, Rambo*

* Indicates additional traffic tolerance