

Bahia Grass

Bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum* Flugge) was introduced from Brazil in 1914. It was originally used as a pasture grass on the sandy soils of the southeastern United States. Additional varieties have been introduced since that time for use as lawn grasses. Bahiagrass is a popular, low-maintenance lawn grass that does well with limited water and fertilizer inputs. Although bahiagrass does not produce a carpet-like, dense lawn like some other warm-season lawn grasses, it does provide a good, low-maintenance lawn where slightly reduced visual quality is acceptable.

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Advantages: Bahiagrass forms an extensive, deep root system. It sustains better than other grasses in infertile, sandy soils and does not require high inputs of water or fertilizer. This makes it a good choice for home sites on large lots or acreage or for anywhere that there is no irrigation system. Bahiagrass prefers acidic soils, such as those found in the central area of much of the state. It does not form excessive thatch. Bahiagrass can reseed itself from the seed heads that it produces, especially during the long days of summer. It has relatively few disease and insect problems.

Disadvantages: Bahiagrass is harvested from pastures and tends to have an uneven soil mat. This makes it difficult to initially create a lawn with a very smooth appearance. Additionally, Bahiagrass grows in clumps and does not have runners like St. Augustine sod. Because of this, when harvesting and relaying Bahiagrass, it will initially appear lumpy. Over time your lawn will tend to become more even. In some cases it may be necessary to spread sand across portions of your lawn to help fill in any holes in the lawn. At initial installation Bahiagrass will shock and take a few weeks to green up. Bahiagrass forms tall, unsightly seed heads throughout the spring, summer, and fall months that many find objectionable. This necessitates regular mowing to keep the stalks from becoming too tall. The seed stems are tough and can wear out mower blades, requiring them to be sharpened frequently. Bahiagrass does not grow well in high-pH soils, such as those found in coastal areas, and therefore is not a good choice for these areas. High pH tends to cause yellowing of leaf tissue due to iron deficiency. Bahiagrass has few insect problems, but it is susceptible to mole crickets. It does not have good tolerance for shade, traffic, or saltwater. Bahiagrass grows in an open growth habit, which can result in weed encroachment into sparse areas. It has a coarse leaf texture and provides less cushioning for recreational activities than some other species. Bahiagrass does best in full sun.