



## **Planting A New Lawn**

### **Selection of Lawn Type**

Kentucky Bluegrass is by far the most common type of lawn grass grown in Western Colorado. There are many different varieties of Bluegrass, and they vary in their fertility needs, reaction to weather conditions, disease resistance, and other characteristics. It's best to plant a mixture of varieties to take advantage of each of their strengths. At Bookcliff Gardens, we carry a mixture of premium varieties of Bluegrass which are proven to thrive here. Bluegrass is a creeping type grass, has deep green color and soft, fine texture. It requires regular watering and fertilizing, at least weekly mowing, and can be prone to a variety of insect and disease problems. It can also form thick thatch layers unless properly maintained by aerating regularly.

Perennial Ryegrass is often mixed with Bluegrass. The turf is identical to Bluegrass, and it can impart better salt and traffic tolerance to your lawn. It also germinates very quickly, helping to stabilize the seedbed until the lawn is established. It can be used alone as a lawn grass, but it requires more maintenance (fertilizer especially) than Bluegrass. Generally best used in combination with Bluegrass, Ryegrass is a bunch type grass that generally does not form thick thatch layers.

Turf Type Tall Fescues have also gained in popularity in recent years. Newer varieties will be just slightly coarser and a little lighter green than Bluegrass, but otherwise difficult to tell apart. Watering requirements are another reason to consider Tall Fescue. While they require the same amount of water as Bluegrass, their deeper root system allows for less frequent watering. However, Tall Fescues can fail to deliver expected water savings in heavy clay soils because the plants cannot develop a deep, water conserving root system due to poor aeration in the deeper levels of these heavy clays. Soil preparation can overcome this problem, but only if done to extremely deep levels (16"-20"), well beyond the reach of any rototiller. Though less prone initially to insect and disease problems, we're starting to see more of them crop up as more Fescue is planted. Tall Fescue is a bunch type grass, which is nice because it doesn't tend to invade adjacent beds the way Bluegrass does. However, if a dead spot develops (those of you with female dogs know what I'm talking about!) the grass will not fill in by itself the way Bluegrass will. You will have to reseed the area to fill it back in.

Buffalo Grass is an excellent choice where using less water is of paramount importance. It will not survive in the Grand Valley without supplemental watering, but it requires much less water than the other common types of lawn grass. Buffalo Grass is a warm season grass, greening up in mid May, and browning out in late September into October. It is a creeping type grass, grayish green in color, reminiscent of a dwarf Bermuda Grass. It looks its best if watered two to four times a month during the summer. It can be mowed as a traditional lawn, or allowed to grow to produce a short, meadow-like lawn.

Other types of grass such as Creeping Red Fescue, Alkalagrass, and Bermuda Grass may or may not be better suited to your particular situation – come in and talk to us about it.

### **Soil Preparation**

Poor soil conditions are a leading cause of lawn failure. The only time significant changes in the lawn soil can be made is before the lawn is planted. Once the lawn is in, soil improvement can be made only gradually and with considerable cost and difficulty. Good soil preparation needs to be done whether you are seeding, sodding, or hydroseeding your lawn. A thoroughly decomposed organic material like Composted Manure, Barkmulch, Compost, or Peat Moss all work well in improving our soils. Three to four

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