

# LOUISIANA HOME LAWN SERIES

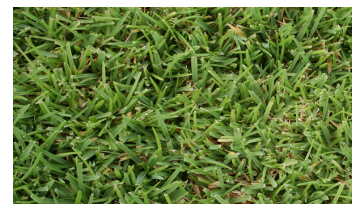
A guide to maintaining a healthy Louisiana lawn



## St. Augustinegrass

### Description

St. Augustinegrass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum* [Walter] Kuntze) is a common perennial warm-season turfgrass grown in Louisiana. St. Augustinegrass has a low tolerance for cold temperatures but is well-suited to warm, humid weather, making it a popular choice among homeowners. It also has greater shade tolerance among warm-season turfgrasses. St. Augustine aggressively spreads through stolons (aboveground stems) and can be established via plugs or sod.



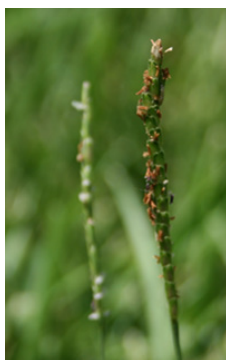
*St. Augustinegrass*

### Identification

St. Augustinegrass is a dense, coarse-textured turfgrass with folded, medium-to-dark green leaves. Leaves are oppositely arranged on the stolon and have a wide, rounded tip. It has thick, singular seed heads, which extend slightly above the leaf blades and produce small, white-brownish flowers. St. Augustinegrass produces robust stolons (aboveground stems), which allows it to spread laterally.



*Wide leaf blades*



*Seed head*



*Stolon*

**HINT:** *St. Augustinegrass can be confused with centipedegrass and carpetgrass. Note that St. Augustinegrass has wide, rounded, oppositely arranged leaves compared to the narrow, rounded, alternatively arranged leaves of centipedegrass and carpetgrass.*

### Growing Conditions

- **Soil Type:** Grows in various soil types that have moderate fertility and good drainage.
- **Soil pH:** Prefers soil that is very slightly acidic (< pH 7) to neutral (> pH 7), with soil pH ideally around 6.5. Always follow soil test recommendations to achieve desired soil pH.
- **Light:** St. Augustinegrass performs best in full sun but can tolerate moderate shade.
- **Growth Rate:** Spreads quickly and vigorously via stolons.

#### TIP

Before amending the soil, consider testing your soil at the LSU AgCenter Soil Testing and Plant Analysis Lab.

Visit [http://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/our\\_offices/departments/spess/servicelabs/soil\\_testing\\_lab](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/our_offices/departments/spess/servicelabs/soil_testing_lab) or contact your local extension office for more information.

# Maintenance Requirements

- **Mowing and Traffic:** Mow at 2.5 to 3 inches routinely during the growing season. Never remove more than one-third of the leaf blade height at one mowing. Mowing St. Augustinegrass at the appropriate height is key in preventing scalping and reducing weed encroachment.
  - **Fertilization:** Fertilize with up to 3 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year. Fertilizer should be applied from midspring to midsummer. Never apply more than 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application. Nitrogen will result in faster St. Augustinegrass growth so applying lower nitrogen rates may be advisable. Follow soil recommendations for proper fertility.
  - **Irrigation:** Naturally occurring rainfall may provide sufficient water for maintaining a healthy turfgrass in normal years, but irrigation may need to be applied to prevent plant water stress during drought periods.
  - **Dethatching and Aeration:** Thatch can develop over time and may need to be reduced through vertical mowing. Compaction can form more quickly on finer-textured soils and in areas where there is high traffic. Dethatching or aeration need to be performed in late spring to summer.
- 

## Establishment Methods

Establishing St. Augustinegrass in the lawn can be achieved via plugs or sod. Sodding is the most commonly used method for St. Augustinegrass establishment. No commercial St. Augustinegrass seed is currently available in Louisiana.

- **Plugs:** Purchase or create plugs from sod and plant each piece about 1 foot apart. Irrigate, fertilize and apply weed control as necessary until established.
- **Sod:** Purchase sod and lay it on a smooth soil surface. Irrigate frequently after laying sod and continue to irrigate as needed until sod roots are established.

---

#### Authors:

Jeffrey Beasley, Associate Professor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences; Ronald Strahan, Associate Professor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences  
Kayla Sanders, Extension Associate, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences

Visit our website: [www.LSUAgCenter.com](http://www.LSUAgCenter.com)

Pub. 3624-SS (Online Only) 2/19

William B. Richardson, LSU Vice President for Agriculture  
Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, LSU College of Agriculture  
The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

---