

LOUISIANA HOME LAWN SERIES

A guide to maintaining a healthy Louisiana lawn



Bahiagrass

Description

Bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum* Flueggé) is a perennial warm-season turfgrass commonly grown in Louisiana. It can grow in a range of soil types and is especially adapted to areas with drier soil conditions. Compared to other warm-season turfgrass species, it has low water and nutrient requirements. These characteristics make bahiagrass a popular choice for areas along roadsides and highways. It establishes somewhat quickly and spreads primarily through seeds.

Identification

Bahiagrass is a coarse-textured turfgrass with medium-green leaves. Leaves sometimes are folded with sharply pointed tips and have sparse hairs and purpling at the base. Seed heads are composed of two spikes (stems of clustered flowers) that both attach at the flower stem to form a distinct V shape. Spikes are lined with tiny, dark brown-to-black flowers. Bahiagrass has deep and extensive root systems with robust, woody-like rhizomes (underground stems).



Bahiagrass



Seed head



Rhizomes

Growing Conditions

- **Soil Type:** Grows in a range of soil types and can tolerate drier soil conditions.
- **Soil pH:** Prefers slightly acidic soils (< pH 7), ideally between 5.5 - 7. Always follow soil test recommendations to achieve desired soil pH.
- **Light:** Prefers full-sun areas.
- **Growth Rate:** Growth is moderate and spreads through seed and rhizomes.

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 or contact your local extension office for more information.

Maintenance Requirements

- **Mowing and Traffic:** Mow at 2.5 to 4 inches routinely during the growing season. Never remove more than one-third of the leaf blade height at one mowing. Mowing at the appropriate height is key in preventing scalping and reducing weed encroachment. Bahiagrass produces unsightly seed heads. Adjust mowing frequency as desired.
 - **Fertilization:** Fertilize with up to 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per year. Fertilizer should be applied from mid-spring to summer. Never apply more than 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application. Follow soil test 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 does not typically develop in bahiagrass. Compaction can form more quickly on finer-textured soils and in areas where there is high traffic. Aeration needs to be performed in late spring to summer when the turfgrass is actively growing.
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Establishment Methods

Establishing a bahiagrass lawn can be achieved through seed or sod, but bahiagrass is most commonly established in Louisiana through seeding. Sod is not traditionally available in Louisiana.

- **Seed:** Select and purchase your desired seed. Follow the manufacturer's labeled directions for seeding rate. Rake seeds into the soil surface to ensure good soil-to-seed contact. Irrigate until seeds germinate and as needed throughout establishment.

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