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# Turfgrass Selection for the Home Landscape

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**S**uccessful selection of a turfgrass requires knowing how the turf will be used, where it will be grown, and what level of quality is desired. It is also important to know how much time and effort will be dedicated to installing and maintaining the turf. If very high quality is desired, a lot of time and effort will be required. The positive and negative characteristics of each species of turfgrass must be evaluated in order to choose the one best suited to a particular situation.

The lists below rank common turfgrasses according to important characteristics and cultural requirements. Within a category, a given grass may differ little from the one listed immediately above or below it; it may, however, differ greatly from one further up or down on the list. The position of a particular turfgrass in a list may change slightly as more is learned about it. Some characteristics of an improved variety may be substantially different than the original species. Its position is also affected by the climate and microclimate at the intended location of establishment. The general ranking (high, low, or intermediate) of turf varieties can be very useful in the selection process.

The warm-season turfgrasses usually lose their green color and are dormant in winter if the average air temperature drops below 50° to 60°F. Some may die if exposed to subfreezing temperatures for extended periods.

The cool-season turfgrasses do not ordinarily lose their green color unless the average air temperature drops below 32°F for an extended period. They turn green again as soon as temperatures rise above freezing and are not usually damaged by subfreezing temperatures.

## Types of Turfgrass

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### Common name

(Grasses listed in **bold type** are more appropriate for the home lawn.)

### Scientific name

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Annual ryegrass*	<i>Lolium multiflorum</i>
<b>Bermudagrass</b> (common)	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>
<b>Bermudagrass</b> (hybrid)	<i>Cynodon</i> spp.
Colonial bentgrass	<i>Agrostis tenuis</i>
Creeping bentgrass	<i>Agrostis palustris</i>
Dichondra**	<i>Dichondra micrantha</i>
Highland bentgrass	<i>Agrostis</i> spp. Cv "Highland"
<b>Kentucky bluegrass</b>	<i>Poa pratensis</i>
Kikuyugrass	<i>Pennisetum clandestinum</i>
<b>Perennial ryegrass</b>	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>
St. Augustinegrass	<i>Stenotaphrum secundatum</i>
<b>Tall fescue</b>	<i>Festuca arundinacea</i>
<b>Zoysiagrass</b>	<i>Zoysia</i> spp.

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\*Annual ryegrass is inferior in generally recognized turfgrass characteristics; therefore, it is not ranked here with other turfgrass species. It is, however, commonly used to overseed winter-dormant, warm-season turfgrasses, or where a temporary vegetative cover is needed.

\*\*Although considered a perennial broadleaf and not a true grass, dichondra can be maintained as a lawn in regions where warm season turfgrasses are adapted.

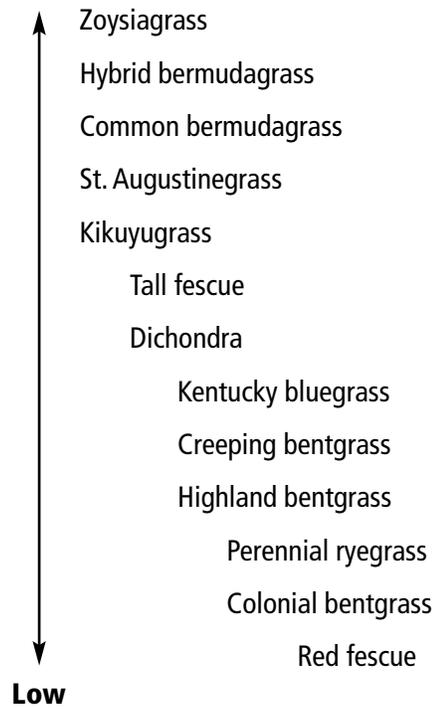
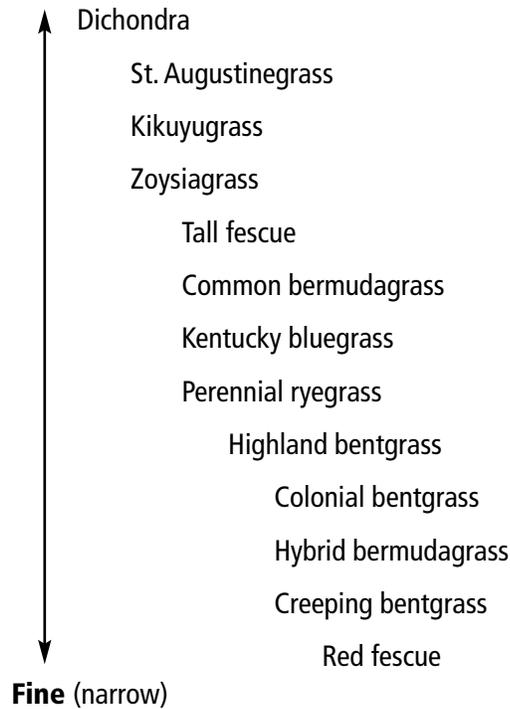
Grasses are shown grouped together if they are at the same level of suitability in a particular category.

**Texture** (leaf-blade width)

**Heat Tolerance**

**Coarse** (broad)

**High**

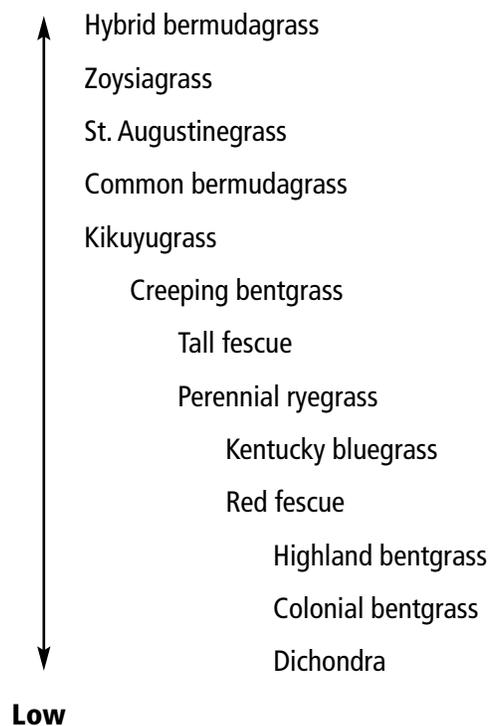


**Cold Tolerance** (winter color persistence)

**Salinity Tolerance**

**High**

**High**



**Mowing Height Adaptation**

**High cut**

- Tall fescue
- Red fescue
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Perennial ryegrass
- St. Augustinegrass
- Common bermudagrass
- Zoysiagrass
- Dichondra
- Kikuyugrass
- Colonial bentgrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Creeping bentgrass

**Low cut**

**Drought Tolerance**

**High**

- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Zoysiagrass
- Common bermudagrass
- St. Augustinegrass
- Kikuyugrass
- Tall fescue
- Red fescue
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Perennial ryegrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Creeping bentgrass
- Colonial bentgrass
- Dichondra

**Low**

**Nitrogen Requirement**

**High**

- Creeping bentgrass
- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Dichondra
- Perennial ryegrass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Colonial bentgrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Tall fescue
- Common bermudagrass
- St. Augustinegrass
- Red fescue
- Zoysiagrass
- Kikuyugrass

**Low**

**Disease Incidence**

**High**

- Dichondra
- Creeping bentgrass
- Colonial bentgrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Red fescue
- Perennial ryegrass
- St. Augustinegrass
- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Tall fescue
- Zoysiagrass
- Common bermudagrass
- Kikuyugrass

**Low**

**Shade Tolerance**

**High** (shade)

- Red fescue
- St. Augustinegrass
- Zoysiagrass
- Dichondra
- Kikuyugrass
- Creeping bentgrass
- Colonial bentgrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Tall fescue
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Perennial ryegrass
- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Common bermudagrass

**Low** (sun)

**Recovery from Severe Injury**

**Complete**

- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Kikuyugrass
- Common bermudagrass
- Zoysiagrass
- Creeping bentgrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Dichondra
- St. Augustinegrass
- Tall fescue
- Perennial ryegrass
- Red fescue
- Colonial bentgrass

**Partial**

**Wear Resistance**

**High**

- Zoysiagrass
- Kikuyugrass
- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Tall fescue
- Common bermudagrass
- Perennial ryegrass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Red fescue
- St. Augustinegrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Colonial bentgrass
- Creeping bentgrass
- Dichondra

**Low**

**Establishment Rate**

**Fast**

- Perennial ryegrass
- Tall fescue
- Common bermudagrass
- Dichondra
- Highland bentgrass
- Colonial bentgrass
- Creeping bentgrass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Kikuyugrass
- Red fescue
- St. Augustinegrass
- Zoysiagrass

**Slow**

**Recovery from Moderate Wear**

**Maintenance Cost and Effort\***

**Fast**

**High**

- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Kikuyugrass
- Common bermudagrass
- Tall fescue
- Perennial ryegrass
- St. Augustinegrass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Dichondra
- Highland bentgrass
- Creeping bentgrass
- Red fescue
- Zoysiagrass
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- Hybrid bermudagrass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Colonial bentgrass
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- St. Augustinegrass
- Highland bentgrass
- Zoysiagrass
- Tall fescue
- Common bermudagrass
- Kikuyugrass

**Slow**

**Low**

\*Red fescue is not included here due to its limited use.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

You'll find detailed information on many aspects of turfgrass management in these titles and in other publications, slide sets, and videos from UC ANR:

*UC IPM Pest Management Guidelines: Turfgrass*, Publication 3365-T

*Managing Turfgrasses during Drought*, Publication 21499

*Diseases and Pests of Turfgrass: Identification and Control*, Slide Set 93/102

*UC IPM Pest Notes* online at <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>

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