



What grass blends make the best lawns in western Oregon?

If you are ready to establish a new lawn in Douglas County and you are not sure which type of grass you should be using here are a few guidelines you could follow. Keep in mind that the percentages of mixture components have some flexibility.

For general turf on sunny sites: Use 70-80% perennial ryegrass and 20-30% fine fescue. This makes a lawn that is rugged, will tolerate some shade, requires medium to high fertility initially to look good and should be cut at 1.5-2 inches. Seeding rate 5-6 lbs. / 1000 sq. ft. The fine fescue will eventually take over more than 20-30% of the stand especially if the stand is not fertilized regularly. This stand is moderately drought hardy.

Another option for sunny sites: Use 50% perennial ryegrass and 50% bluegrass. The ryegrass will establish quickly and by the second or third year the bluegrass catches up. This mix needs full sun and high fertility to continue to look good. Mow this lawn at 1.5-2 inches tall. This mix is not drought hardy, it will need regular irrigation.

For general turf on shady sites: Use 70% fine fescue and 30% perennial ryegrass. This is an easy lawn to maintain with medium to low fertility demands. If your site is shady and wet be alert for more fungal problems on leaves. This mix is very drought hardy and can recover quickly from the dry season if you let it go dormant (dry) once well established. Cut this mix at 2 inches tall. Seeding rate 4-5 pounds/ 1000 sq. ft.

Low maintenance or Eco-lawn: Use 90% perennial ryegrass, 4% strawberry clover, 5% yarrow and 1% English daisy. Seeding rate is 2 lbs. of mix per 1000 sq.ft. This stand establishes quickly. Mow at 2 inches tall. This mix will require regular irrigation in the first year but after that it has held up well with as few as two irrigations per summer, one in July and one in August. The goal of this type of turf is to reduce the use fertilizers, herbicides, irrigation and mowing frequency.

Optimum soil pH ranges for commonly grown turf grasses

Perennial ryegrass 5.5-6.5
Fine fescues 5.5-6.5
Kentucky bluegrass 6.0-7.0

Adjusting the soil pH:

Always have your soil pH tested if you are renovating or planting a new lawn.

General Rate: 50-80 pounds of lime / 1000sq. ft.

Use a split application of lime, one in April the other in October if your pH is below 5.2 and requires over 50 pounds of lime to get your pH back into the desired range.

References:

Turfgrass Culture in the Pacific Northwest by Tom Cook OSU Horticulture Department

Steve Renquist
Horticulture Agent