

Centipede

(Eremochloa Büse)

Centipede Grass is a low, medium textured, slow growing, but aggressive grass that can produce a dense, attractive, weed-free turf. It is more shade tolerant than bermudagrass but less shade tolerant than St. Augustine and zoysiagrass. Since centipede produces only surface runners, it is easily controlled around borders of flower beds and walks. Centipedegrass is native to China and southeast Asia and ranks between Bermudagrass and St. Augustinegrass in leaf width, shoot density, and stem size.

Its popularity as a lawn grass stems from its adaptation to low fertility conditions and its low maintenance requirements. Where Centipedegrass is adapted and properly managed, it has few serious pest problems. It is particularly well adapted to the sandy, acid soils of the southeastern United States. Its westward movement is somewhat limited by severe iron deficiencies that develop in the alkaline soils of the arid regions. And, its northward movement is restricted by low temperatures. Centipedegrass is slightly more cold tolerant than St. Augustine grass, but extended periods of 5°F or less can kill Centipedegrass.

Centipedegrass is moderately shade tolerant, but grows best in full sunlight. It is not as salt tolerant as St. Augustine or Bermudagrass. Centipedegrass thrives on moderately acid soils, pH 5 to 6. Above pH 7.0 iron becomes a limiting factor and supplemental applications of iron may be required.

Centipedegrass does not enter a true dormant state during winter months and is severely injured by intermittent cold and warm periods during spring. Hard freezes kill the leaves and young stolons of Centipedegrasses. The grass usually recovers as soon as temperatures become favorable. Recurring cycles of cold / warm during the winter months depletes its energy reserves and is susceptible to extreme winterkill. Thus, its adaptation is limited to areas with mild winter temperatures.

Centipede is the ideal grass for the homeowner who wants a fairly attractive lawn that needs little care. Centipede does not require much fertilizer or mowing, and compared to other lawn grasses, is generally resistant to most insects and diseases. It will, however, respond to good management and provide a very attractive turf. Centipede can be established from either seeds or sprigs. Since it is slow growing, it takes longer than bermuda and St. Augustine to completely cover an area.

Planting rate: 1/4-lb per 1,000 sq. Ft. (Centipede seed is extremely small (600,000 per lb) and will distribute more evenly if mixed with 20-lbs of dry sand to one pound of seed)

Planting time: Mid-March thru mid-August

Germination Time: Seed planted early spring should germinate in 2 to 4 weeks with adequate moisture. Seed planted after the soil warms should germinate in 10 to 14 days with adequate moisture.

Prepare the seed bed by removing rocks and debris. Loosen the soil to a depth of several inches and incorporate starter fertilizer. Rake and smooth the soil surface. Spread Seed. Lightly rake seed into the ground to a maximum of 1/4" deep. Keep soil moist until 1st mowing. Watering 3-4 times per day may be necessary. Mow new grass to a height of 1-1/2" as soon as it reaches 2-3". Wait until the grass is mowed 2 -3 times before using weed killers.

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