



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA TURFGRASS SCIENCE

The Turfgrass Science program at the University of Minnesota is part of the Department of Horticultural Science in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences. At our Turfgrass, Research Outreach and Education Center (TROE) on the Saint Paul campus we conduct research on low-input turfgrasses for cold climates and help develop best management practices.

Minnesota Home Lawns

The turfgrasses that are typically planted on lawns in Minnesota are considered cool-season grasses. These grasses show increased growth during the spring and fall and reduced growth during the heat of the summer. Most home lawns in Minnesota are composed primarily of Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and fine fescue. A brief description of several lawn grasses is shown below.

SPECIES	CHARACTERISTICS	MAINTENANCE	HIGHLIGHTS
FINE FESCUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes 5 fescues: strong creeping red, slender creeping red, hard, Chewings, and sheep - Drought, shade, and salt tolerant - Often mixed with Kentucky bluegrass - Does not do well in extreme heat - Called "fine" due to narrow leaf blades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower maintenance requirements, including less irrigation, mowing, and fertilizing - Do not mow in summer heat - Fertilize in fall if needed for low-maintenance lawns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A mix of strong creeping red, Chewings and hard fescue is excellent for home lawns - Hard fescue is the most drought tolerant - Strong creeping red and Chewings fescue are the most tolerant of tree shade - Sheep fescue = low maintenance
TALL FESCUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deep rooting and drought tolerant - Tolerant of wear and traffic - Can be used in the shade - Slightly coarser than Kentucky bluegrass - Slow spring green up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase turf-type tall fescues for lawns - Lower maintenance requirement - Spring seedings will survive winter better in the first year - Do not plant in areas that hold ice in the winter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the most drought tolerant turfgrasses for MN due to deep and extensive roots - Heat and traffic tolerant
KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dark green appearance - Spreading ability with rhizomes - May not grow well in shade - "Boat-shaped" leaf tip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher maintenance requirement (fertilizer, water, etc.) than most other cool-season turfgrasses - Frequent mowing required - May create dense thatch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most popular turfgrass in MN - Has fast recovery - Used on home lawns, parks, athletic fields, golf courses - Most widely available species as sod
PERENNIAL RYEGRASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lacks winterhardiness - Good wear tolerance - Pointed leaf tip - Often produces unsightly stems in the late spring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher maintenance requirement - Very quick establishment - Susceptible to many diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Used on home lawns, athletic fields, golf courses - Some perennial ryegrass seed is produced in northern MN
Options for Ultra-Low Maintenance		Options for Dense Shade	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prairie Junegrass, Tufted Hairgrass, Buffalograss - Natives of North America; use in non-irrigated areas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supina Bluegrass, Rough Bluegrass - Prefer areas with plentiful moisture; seed expensive 	

For more information:

turf.umn.edu

extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to Discover®

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION