

Species Selection

The type of species to use on a sports field depends on climate, desired appearance and quality, amount of field use, pest resistance, and the amount of management it will receive. Desirable species for fields in the cool season regions include Kentucky bluegrass, Tall fescue and Perennial ryegrass. In the warm season region, Bermudagrass is the most popular species used.

Kentucky bluegrass is preferred for its appearance, rhizomatous growth habit, which provides for a high recuperative capacity, and tolerance to mowing heights between 1 to 2.5 inches. Kentucky bluegrass performs poorly in excessive heat and also has a slow rate of establishment.

Tall fescue is preferred for its high heat and wear tolerance. It performs best when maintained between 2 and 3 inches. Certain cultivars contain endophytes, which are fungi within the plant that cause it to be an undesirable food source for some insects. Tall fescue has a poor recuperative capacity, and because of its bunch-type growth, can cause the playing surface to be bumpy.

Perennial ryegrass is preferred for its quick establishment and high wear tolerance. It performs best when maintained between 1.5 to 2 inches. Certain cultivars also contain endophytes. Perennial ryegrass does not do well in excessive heat.

Bermudagrass is preferred for its rhizomatous and stoloniferous growth habit, high recuperative capacity, and tolerance to heat and wear. It can tolerate mowing heights of 1 inch or less. Bermudagrass cannot withstand cooler temperatures.

References: Information for Species Selection was taken from "Minimizing Pesticides – Innovative Solutions for Intensely Trafficked Fields" By Frank Rossi PhD – Cornell University