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2026-27 Virginia Turfgrass Variety Recommendations

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Introduction

The Maryland-Virginia Turfgrass Variety Recommendation Work Group meets annually to consider the previous year's data from the Virginia and Maryland National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) and ancillary trials and to formulate these recommendations (Figure 1). Virginia and Maryland variety recommendations are essentially identical except for specialized grasses and research situations that differ due to adaptation and state regulation. To qualify for this recommended list, turfgrass varieties: 1) must be available as certified seed or, in the case of vegetative varieties, as certified sprigs or sod; 2) must be tested at sites in both Virginia and Maryland; 3) must perform well, relative to other varieties, for a minimum of two years to make the list as a "promising" variety and for three years to make the "recommended" category. All test locations in Virginia and Maryland are considered in making these recommendations. The Virginia Crop Improvement Association (VCIA) will accept the turfgrass blends or mixtures listed below in the VCIA Sod Certification Program. All seed or vegetative material must be certified and meet minimum quality standards prescribed by the VCIA. Many seeding specifications (for municipalities, counties, state and governmental agencies, landscape architects, and professional organizations) state that varieties used for turfgrass establishment must come from this list and that blends or mixtures follow the guidelines for certified sod production. Specifications for state highway seeding can be developed separately and may require some species and/or varieties not normally recommended for uses other than roadside seeding. Seed availability may vary between turf seed suppliers. Some species and varieties may have limited adaptation.



Figure 1. Replicated variety trials are conducted for up to 6 years in various locations across Virginia and Maryland to identify the best performing turfgrass cultivars in the challenging environmental conditions of the Mid-Atlantic.

For more information on variety performance in Virginia and Maryland, consult species-specific data at www.ntep.org.

Kentucky bluegrass

Individual varieties selected must make up not less than 10% and not more than 35% of the total mixture on a weight basis. All varieties must be certified. Selections can be made from Category I alone or various combinations of Categories I and II. Kentucky bluegrasses listed as "Promising" (Category II below) can account for no more than 35% of the blend by weight.

Category I – Recommended Kentucky bluegrass varieties (65-100% of blend by weight).

After Midnight, Aries, Babe, Bluebank, Blue Coat, Blue Note, Bolt, Bombay, Cloud, Endurance, Hampton, Legend, Midnight, Pivot, Selway, Shadow Hawk, Shannon, Skye, SPF30, Starr, Tirem, United, and Yellowstone.

Category II – Promising Kentucky bluegrass varieties (10-35% on a weight basis).

Acoustic, Amaze, Barserati, Barvette, Blue Devil, Blue Gem, Blue Magic, Dauntless, Electric, Finish Line, Jersey, New Moon, Nurush, Orion, Syrah, Twilight, Volt[1], and Wildhorse[1]. (Volt and Wildhorse are only for mixing with tall fescue for mixed species sod production).

Tall fescue

Both recommended and promising varieties can be used in the VCIA Sod Certification program.

Category I – Recommended tall fescue varieties (90-100% on a weight basis).

4th Millennium SRP, Annapolis[3], Avenger III[4], Black Tail[3], Bladerunner 3[4], Bullseye LTZ, Catalyst[3], Clash[4], Crossfire 4, Daybreak, Degas, Dragster, Dynamite G-LS[4], Essential 2[4], Expanse, Extravaganza[4], Fantasia, Fastlane, Fayette[3,4], Firebird 2, Firecracker G-LS, Firecracker SLS[3], Firehawk SLT[4], Firenza II[4], Firewall[3], GLX Aced[3,4], Gold Medallion, Grande 3, GTO, Guardian 41[3], Hemi[4], Houndog 8[3], Lifeguard[4], Maestro[3], Michelangelo, Monument[3,4], Moondance GLX[4], Naturally Green, O'Keefe, Oriole[4], Padre 2[4], Paramount[3,4], Penn RK4[3], Pro Gold, Raptor III[3], Raptor LS [3,4], Rebel V[3], Rebel XLR[3], Rebounder[3], Reflection[3], Regenerate[3], Rockwell, Rover, Saltillo, Screamer LS[3], Serenade[4], Spyder 2LS[4], Southside, SR 8650[3], Stealth[4], Sunset Gold[1,3], Supersonic[3], Symphony[4], Talladega II[4], Technique, Temple, Thor, Titan GLX, Titanium 2LS[3,4], Titanium G-LS[4], Tough[4], Trinity[3], Turbo RZ, Valkyrie LS, Warrior, and Wichita.

Category II – Promising tall fescue varieties (may be 90-100% of the mixture on a weight basis).

AST 8218LM[4], AST5118, AST5119, Bachelor, Battle Hawk, Bentley, Bonfire, Bravo 2[4], Capitan, Easy Green, Ethos, Endgame[4], Estrena[4], Fairfield, Falcon Supreme[4], Finelawn Supreme[4], Galactic, Gallardo, GLX Revive[4], GRO-PRO, Hellcat GLR, Houndog 9[4], Kizzle[4], Lafayette[4], Mammath, Matisse[4], Motif, Providence[4], Raceway, Rhizing Moon, Rowdier[4], Rundle, SR 8700[4], Tango[4], Tank, Teacher[4], Titan Max, Triad, Turfway, Valsetz[4], Xanadu, and Zion.

Kentucky bluegrass varieties recommended for mixing with tall fescue sod to enhance sod strength (10% standard, up to 15% of the seed mixture by weight is possible for certification):

All cultivars in Categories I and II above.

Bermudagrass

Varietal differences in texture and winter hardiness are important considerations. Varieties with the # are only recommended in Virginia's warmest regions due to cold tolerance concerns.

Category I – Recommended vegetatively propagated bermudagrass varieties:

Celebration#, Iron Cutter, Latitude 36, Northbridge, Patriot4, Tahoma 31, TifTuf (DT-1), and Tifway#.

Category II – Promising vegetatively propagated bermudagrass varieties:

Celebration Hybrid.

Category III – Recommended seeded bermudagrass varieties:
None at this time.

Category IV – Promising seeded bermudagrass varieties:
Astro, Copperhead, Monaco, Rio, and Sun Queen.

Zoysiagrass
Varietal differences in texture and winter hardiness are important considerations.

Category I – Recommended vegetatively propagated zoysiagrass varieties:
Innovation, Lobo, Meyer, and Zeon.

Category II – Promising vegetatively propagated zoysiagrass varieties:
Stadium.

Category III – Recommended seeded zoysiagrass varieties:
Zenith.

Perennial ryegrass
Not for use in sod production.

Category I – Recommended perennial ryegrass varieties:
Apple 3GL[4], Apple SGL[4], Benchmark, Big League[4], Fastball 3GL[4], Grand Slam GLD[4], High Octane, Homerun G-LS, Homerun LS, Karma[1], Lightspeed, Performance, Piston, Prominent II, Quasar, Slugger 3GL[4], Soprano, Stellar 3GL[4], Stellar 4GL, Sundown, and Superstar GL[4].

Category II – Promising perennial ryegrass varieties:
Alpha Centauri, Apple 4SGL, Aspiration, Authentic, Brightstar SLT, Dark Matter, Elecktra GLR, Elevate, Exceed, Fastball 4GL, Flightline, Grand Slam G-LS, Gray Eagle SLT, Greenback, Homerun G-LS, Ignition, Justify, Legacy III, Line Drive Supreme, Nexus DK, Notable III, Patriarch, Pisces, Relic, Shield[4], Signet[4], Silver Sport[4], Siletz, Slider SG, Stinger, Ultra Sport, Vortex SRT and Wicked Cool.

Fine fescues
For general use in low maintenance areas or in partial to full shade. Promising varieties have limited performance data or availability as certified seed. Neither blending varieties nor mixing species have been studied extensively in MD or VA, and limited research does not indicate any advantage to blending or mixing varieties from the different fine fescue species listed.

Creeping red fescue – Recommended varieties:
Hype

Creeping red fescue –Promising varieties:
Frenzy, Harbor MR[1], and Navigator III.

Chewings fescue – Recommended varieties:
Compass II, Jamestown VII[3], and Radar II.

Chewings fescue – Promising varieties:
Brittany 2, Resonance[1], and Sigma

Hard fescue – Recommended varieties:
Beacon II, Gladiator, Minimus[4], Resolute, Sword[4], Sword II, and Tenacious.

Hard fescue – Promising varieties:
Accentuate

Sheep fescue – Recommended or promising varieties:
None at this time.

Kentucky bluegrass varieties recommended for mixing with fine fescue sod to enhance sod strength (up to 10% of the seed mixture by weight):
All cultivars in Categories I and II above.

Varieties marked with superscript notations denote the following:
(1) to be considered for removal in 2027 due to declining performance relative to other varieties.

(2) to be considered for removal in 2027 due to declining seed quality.

(3) to be considered for removal in 2027 due to the absence of recent testing of certified seed lots in MD and VA.

(4) to be considered for removal in 2027 due to lack of recent testing in MD and VA.

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