



How To Maintain Tahoma 31 Bermudagrass

For the most part, managing Tahoma 31 Bermudagrass is similar to maintaining any bermudagrass variety, with a few important exceptions. Overall, Tahoma 31 requires fewer inputs of water and fertilizer, stands up to drought and tolerates shade better than other bermudagrasses.

HEIGHT OF CUT

Tahoma 31 performs best at a height of cut of between 0.125-inch to 2-inches. A rotary mower may be used but a reel mower is preferred for lower heights of cut.

FERTILIZER

Tahoma 31 requires significantly less nitrogen fertilizer than other bermudagrasses. Tahoma 31 is highly effective in its use and processing of Nitrogen fertilizer. It is suggested to apply N at 50% to 75% of the amount of N commonly applied to bermudagrass depending on soil conditions at the installation site. At establishment, it is recommended to apply 1 lb. of N per 1,000 sq.ft.

IRRIGATION

Tahoma 31 requires significantly less water for irrigation than other bermudagrasses. Once established, Tahoma 31 requires 18% less water than TifTuf. Depending on weather, location, and humidity, irrigate Tahoma 31 as needed at the first sign of wilt.

GENERAL BERMUDAGRASS MAINTENANCE TIPS

INTRODUCTION

The following management practices will help you care for your lawn throughout the year. Location, terrain, soil type and condition, age of the lawn, previous lawn care, and other factors affect turf performance, so adjust these management practices and dates to suit your particular lawn.

MARCH THROUGH MAY

Mowing

Mow when the lawn first turns green using a rotary or reel mower set as low as possible without scalping the lawn. Mow the grass before it grows taller than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This initial mowing will remove excess dormant tissue and establish the desired mowing height for the year. Leave nutrient-rich grass clippings on the lawn unless they are unsightly or clumped. If grass clippings are too plentiful, collect and use them as mulch.

Fertilization

Apply nutrients based on soil testing. Contact your local Extension agent for soil testing information. In the absence of a soil test, apply $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pound of nitrogen (N) per 1,000 square feet several weeks after the lawn turns fully green (typically between early April and May).

You need to apply $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of N per 1,000 square feet, so how much fertilizer do you need to buy? Divide 50 by the FIRST number on the fertilizer bag. (The first number always represents N content.) For example, if you've got a 5-5-15 fertilizer, divide 50 by 5 and you get 10. That means you need to buy 10 pounds of fertilizer for every 1,000 square feet of lawn.

Watering

When bermudagrass is growing, supplement rainfall as needed so that the lawn gets about 1 inch of water each week. A bluish-gray appearance or wilted, folded, or curled leaves may indicate that it is time to water. Use a screwdriver or similar implement to check for proper saturation. Sandy soils require more frequent watering (about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water every third day). In clay soils, which accept water slowly, irrigate just until runoff occurs, wait until the water has been absorbed, and begin watering again. Continue until the desired depth or amount is applied. Proper irrigation may prevent or reduce problems later in the summer. Watering between 2 a.m. and 8 a.m. decreases the incidence of certain diseases.

Weed Control

White grubs may be active at this time, but spring curative applications are not effective. Make note of areas with white grub activity and plan to apply a preventive application in

the following spring or early summer. Specific timing will vary depending on white grub species, so plan to make an application when adult flight is at its peak.

Disease Control

As bermudagrass breaks dormancy, spring dead-spot may appear as circular patches of tan or brown sunken turf. Patches may be 2 inches to 3 feet in diameter and typically appear on turf that is 3 to 5 years old. Apply N monthly from mid-May to mid-August to promote recovery, and map affected areas for possible fungicide treatment in the fall. Core aeration and removing excessive thatch may help avoid future problems with spring dead-spot.

Thatch Removal

If thatch (a layer of undecomposed grass) is thicker than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, power rake (vertical mow) in late May. Vertical mow only after the lawn has completely greened up, or recovery will be very slow.

Renovation

In late May, start replanting bare or worn areas using sod or sprigs (three to five bushels per 1,000 square feet). Keep the sod or sprigs continually moist. You should be able to stick your finger down into the soil about 3 or 4 inches and feel moist soil. Be careful not over water. You do not want it to feel muddy or sopping wet. Water your lawn twice a day a day until the sprigs have filled in or the sod has fully rooted. Then irrigate less frequently as needed or at the first sign of wilt.

JUNE THROUGH AUGUST

Mowing

Mow to the desired height. Bermudagrass has a very wide range of acceptable heights ($\frac{5}{8}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches). Maintaining a lower height will require more frequent mowing to prevent scalping. Mowing heights below 1 inch will require a reel mower and very level ground; therefore, most bermudagrass lawns are maintained between 1 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Fertilization

To minimize spring dead spot, apply no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ pound N per 1,000 square feet in September, or four weeks before the first expected frost. Use a low N, high potassium fertilizer like 5-10-30, or supplement with 1 pound of potash (K₂O) per 1,000 square feet four to six weeks before expected frost using $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of muriate of potash (KCl) (0-0-60) or 2 pounds of potassium sulfate (0-0-50). (The third number represents potassium.)

Insect Control

Curative applications applied in early fall may control some white grubs, but efficacy will vary depending on the size of grub. Later instars (larger grubs) are harder to treat than early instars. Identify and make note of problem areas for preventive applications in late spring to early summer.

Disease Control

If spring dead spot was a problem, apply an appropriate fungicide to problem areas at the highest label rates. Applications are most effective when soil temperatures are between 60 and 80°F. To move the fungicide into the root zone, apply with a large volume of water (5 gallons per 1,000 square feet) or water in with at least ½ inch of irrigation immediately after application. Map areas for future target applications so that you will treat only the affected areas.

Watering

Although irrigation is not usually necessary, make sure the soil doesn't get powder-dry.

SEPTEMBER THROUGH NOVEMBER

Mowing

Continue mowing using the March to May guidelines until several weeks before the first expected frost. *In the piedmont:* If the lawn is not overseeded in the winter, raise the mowing height ½ inch to provide more protection from winter kill. Raise the mowing height ½ inch in early to mid-September in the mountains, about mid to late September in the piedmont, and late September to mid-October in the coastal plain.

Fertilization

Have your soil tested. Ask your local Extension agent about a free soil test. Then apply the nutrient your lawn needs. If you don't test, apply a complete nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (N-P-K) turf-grade fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio (that is, 12-4-8 or 16-4-8). For a basic level of fertility, fertilize with 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet in mid-September and again in November (about the time the grass is green but not actively growing).

You need to apply 1 pound of N per 1,000 square feet, so how much fertilizer do you need to buy? Divide 100 by the FIRST number on the fertilizer bag. (The first number always represents N content.) For example, if you've got a 10-10-10 fertilizer, divide 100 by 10 and you get 10. That means you need to buy 10 pounds of fertilizer for every 1,000 square feet of lawn.

Watering

Follow guidelines for March through May.

Weed Control

Apply broadleaf herbicides to control broadleaf weeds like chickweed and henbit, as necessary. Caution: Some herbicides may affect newly sodded turf. Follow label directions.

Insect Control

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Aeration

Aerate lawns that are subject to heavy traffic or grown on clay soils. Remove plugs and break them up to put the soil back into the lawn.

DECEMBER THROUGH FEBRUARY

Mowing

Mow to remove leaves and other debris. Leaf removal will enable earlier and more consistent spring green-up.

Fertilization

DO NOT fertilize at this time. Submit soil samples for analysis every two to three years to determine nutrient requirements. Contact your local Extension agent for details. Depending on the results of your soil test, you may need to apply lime or sulfur to adjust soil pH.

Watering

Follow guidelines for September through November.

Weed Control

Apply broadleaf herbicides as necessary to control winter annual weeds like chickweed and henbit. Atrazine or simazine can be applied in November or December to control annual bluegrass and winter annual broadleaf weeds.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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