

# Bahiagrass

[*Paspalum notatum* Flugge]

## DESCRIPTION

Bahiagrass is a warm-season species that spreads by rhizomes, and is easily recognized by its characteristic "Y-shaped" seedhead. It exhibits low overall quality because of its light color, coarse texture, and open canopy. Due to its rapid lateral spread via aggressive rhizome production it is primarily used in areas where erosion control and immediate ground cover are the main concern. It is frequently planted on roadsides and highway rights of way because it has good drought tolerance. In addition, bahiagrass has the ability to tolerate a wide range of soils. Unfortunately, it can be a very competitive and unsightly weed in highly maintained turf.



Characteristic	Description
Seedhead / Flower	raceme; V-shaped seedhead
Vernation Type	leaves rolled in the bud, may appear to be folded
Ligule Type	membranous; dense white hairs on back, 0.04 inches (1 mm) long
Growth Season / Life Cycle	warm season turf or perennial weed
Auricle Type	absent
Leaf Blade Tip Shape	sharp-pointed; usually sparsely hairy along edge toward base, smooth on both surfaces
Leaf Blade Width	leaf blade mostly greater than 0.2 inches wide, 0.16 - 0.31 inches (4 - 8 mm)
Stolon Presence	absent; due to the open canopy and lack of thatch production, its stout, aggressive rhizomes can sometimes be interpreted as stolons because they appear to grow at or above the soil surface
Rhizome Presence	present; stout
Collar Type	continuous; collar and its edge with hairs
Sheath Margin	open
Sheath Type	flattened; sheath usually not hairy; sharply creased, rather glossy



bahiagrass rolled vernation



bahiagrass rhizome

Note: Still not sure this is the right weed? [The Turf & Weed Identification Decision Aid](#) may help. Check the TurfFiles [glossary](#) for definitions of unfamiliar terms.

## CULTURAL CONTROL

Bahiagrass is well suited for roadsides because of its good drought tolerance and general competitive ability in the southern United States. Unfortunately, it can be very competitive and unsightly in highly maintained turf. As with other perennial paspalums, bahiagrass can be difficult to control. Every effort should be made to prevent these weedy grasses from becoming established in turf, as selective control measures are usually difficult. Maintaining a dense, healthy turf year round by proper mowing and fertilization helps prevent encroachment and weed establishment.

## CHEMICAL CONTROL

Perennial grass weeds generally cannot be controlled with preemergence herbicides, and postemergence options are usually limited due to turf tolerance issues. The only proven way to selectively remove bahiagrass is with multiple applications of arsonate herbicides (DSMA, MSMA, CMA) or metsulfuron (Manor, Blade, etc.) beginning in early spring in tolerant turfgrass species. However, MSMA will be phased out in 2009.

### *Preemergence herbicides:*

Herbicide	Tolerant Turfs <sup>(1)</sup>	Average Efficacy Rating <sup>(2)</sup>	Range of Trial Efficacy Values, %	Number of Trials	Products <sup>(3)</sup>
atrazine*	be, c, sa, z	F		0	AAtrex 4L

### *Postemergence herbicides:*

Herbicide	Tolerant Turfs <sup>(1)</sup>	Average Efficacy Rating <sup>(2)</sup>	Range of Trial Efficacy Values, %	Number of Trials	Products <sup>(3)</sup>
glyphosate & imazapyr		E	100	2	GroundClear Triox
prometon		E	86 - 100	2	Spectracide Total Vegetation Killer
sethoxydim	c	F		0	Vantage
trifloxysulfuron-sodium	be, z	F		0	Monument

\* For use only by or under the supervision of a certified applicator, or by commercial nursery, turf, and landscape personnel.

### **Footnotes:**

#### (1) **Turfgrass Codes:**

- ba bahiagrass
- bc bentgrass, creeping
- be bermudagrass
- bk bluegrass, Kentucky
- c centipedegrass
- f fescue, tall
- r ryegrass, perennial
- sa St. Augustinegrass

z zoysiagrass  
blank No turfgrass in the database is completely tolerant. Check label to see if chemical can be used at a reduced rate or during the dormant season on your turfgrass.

(2) **Efficacy Ratings:**

E excellent control (90 to 100%)  
G good control (80 to 90%)  
F fair control (70 to 80%)

Efficacy ratings are based on herbicide trials performed by weed scientists at North Carolina State University between 1997 and 2007. The number of trials included in the efficacy ratings is displayed in the next-to-last column. The higher this number, the more confidence can be placed in the efficacy values. Trials may have involved sequential applications of one or more chemical. Details of individual trials (herbicide rates, dates of application, environmental conditions at time of application, etc) can be viewed on the TurfFiles web site, through the [Turf Weed Management Decision Aid](#).

Efficacy ratings for chemicals lacking trial data are from "[Pest Management Strategic Plan for Turfgrass in the Southern United States](#)," a summary of a workshop for turf experts from multiple universities held in Griffin, GA in October, 2004. The workshop was sponsored by the Southern Region Integrated Pest Management Center.

- (3) Recommendations of specific chemicals are based upon information on the manufacturer's label and performance in a limited number of trials. Because environmental conditions and methods of application may vary widely, performance of the chemical will not always conform to the safety and pest control standards indicated by experimental data. The order in which brand names are given is not an indication of a recommendation or criticism.

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services does not imply endorsement by North Carolina State University or discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Other brand names may be labeled for use on turfgrasses. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county's Cooperative Extension agent.

**Links contained in this document:**

Glossary: <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/Glossary.aspx>

Pest Management Strategic Plan: <http://www.ipmcenters.org/pmsp/pdf/SouthernTurfgrass.pdf>

Turf & Weed Identification Decision Aid: <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/turfid/>

Turf Weed Management Decision Aid: <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/turfweedmgmt/>

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