



STOVER SEED®

Teaming confidence with nature since 1922

Technical Data and Information Product Sheet

WHITTET Kikuyugrass

DESCRIPTION

Kikuyugrass is a vigorous, warm season grass that spreads by stolons and rhizomes. It is native to tropical Africa but has become naturalized in coastal southern climates such as Southern California and Hawaii. It is similar in appearance to St. Augustine grass with a coarse blade but with a more aggressive growth habit. Whittet is an improved variety from Australia that exhibits taller and more erect growth. Kikuyugrass has some tolerance to light shade and can also be used as a pasture grass. As a warm season grass, kikuyugrass exhibits exceptional tolerance to prolonged periods of drought but can recover with irrigation. Under ideal conditions it is capable of rapid growth making it ideal for high use such as golf courses and sportsfields. Unlike other warm season grasses such as bermuda, kikuyu exhibits winter growth in milder coastal climates and seldom goes dormant.

CHARACTERISTICS

Features

Very good heat and drought tolerance
Vigorous Rhizomatous and Stoloniferous growth habit
No winter dormancy in coastal climates
Shade tolerant
Moderate salt tolerance

Benefits

Meets water conservation goals
Outstanding wear tolerance and rapid recovery
Year round growth
Only one grass needed for sun and shade
Tolerates reclaimed water well

USES

Kikuyu can be grown successfully as turf on:

- * Golf Courses
- * Parks
- * Sportsfields
- * Playgrounds
- * Pastures
- * Commercial Developments

SEEDING RATES

New turf: 1-2 pounds of raw seed per 1,000 square feet or 43-86 pounds per acre.

Overseeding existing turf: 1/2 to 1 pound of raw seed per 1,000 square feet or 22 to 43 pounds per acre.

Prechilling seed for 5 days at 40 degrees will improve germination by 5%. Drill seeding (at 1/2 inch) is preferable to broadcast seeding.

ESTABLISHMENT

Warm season grasses such as kikuyu should be seeded when daytime temperatures are consistently 80 degrees or greater (generally between the months of April and October). Germination is delayed if soil temperatures are below 65 degrees F. Emergence can be anywhere between 14 and 21 days. The higher the soil temperature, the quicker the germination as long as there is adequate moisture (irrigation). First limited use approximately 21 days after emergence.

SPECIFICATIONS

WHITTET KIKUYUGRASS (*Pennisetum clandestinum*)
95% Minimum purity (50% for coated seed)
80% Minimum germination
180,000 seeds per pound (90,000 for coated seed)

RESTRICTIONS:

By order of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, this seed may only be planted in the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura.



STOVER SEED®

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CULTURAL INFORMATION

Water Requirements

Frequent, light watering is necessary for seed to germinate and become established. Kikuyu is a fast growing, warm season grass. Once the grass becomes established it has the ability to withstand summer drought conditions under reduced irrigation schedules. For turf managers that use irrigation systems and calculations, Kikuyu can be irrigated at 60% of average ET_0 (Reference Evapotranspiration) rates to achieve optimum turf quality. Because of the ability of warm season grasses to establish roots at a depth of 3 feet or more it is able to draw water from a larger soil profile which enhances its drought tolerance. **As a result, once kikuyu becomes established (2-3 months in warm weather) it can withstand irrigation schedules at 40% of ET_0 (a reduction of 25%) and still produce acceptable turf.** Specific information on turfgrass irrigation schedules and ET rates can be found at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/UrbanHort/> and at <http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/water/az1195.pdf> and <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8395.pdf> General irrigation guidelines dictate that turf should be watered in early morning hours and that about 3/4 of an inch of water should be applied but not to the point of runoff.

Climate Conditions

Kikuyu is classified as a warm season grass best suited to southern climates. Growth is greatest during warm months. It will go dormant in winter in colder interior valleys but will not go dormant and will produce growth in milder coastal climates.

Soil Conditions

Kikuyu will tolerate a wide range of soils from heavy clay to sandy loam. Ideal pH range is 6.0 to 7.5. Good drainage is important for root development.

Fertilization

Use of a starter fertilizer when seeding is highly recommended. After establishment fertilize during periods of active growth in warm months with a balanced fertilizer. Avoid using products with a high nitrogen (N) content as such use increases water use. Application rates should be between 1 and 2 pounds of nitrogen (N) per 1,000 square feet per year during the growing season. **Slow release fertilizers with trace elements such as iron and manganese are recommended.**

Mowing

No special mower is needed. Results are best when blades are kept sharp. Recommended mowing height is from 1 to 3 inches. Do not mow more than 1/3 of the leaf blade whenever mowing turf. Eliminate thatch as needed with a flail mower.

Drought Tolerance Comparisons of Commonly Grown Grasses in California

Source: University of California, ANR Publication 8395

Relative Ranking	Cool-season turfgrasses	Warm-season turfgrasses
Superior		Bermudagrass Buffalograss
Excellent		Seashore paspalum Zoysiagrass
Good		St. Augustinegrass Kikuyugrass
Medium	Tall Fescue	
Fair	Perennial Ryegrass Kentucky Bluegrass Creeping Bentgrass Hard Fescue Chewings Fescue Red Fescue	

For more information on Whittet Kikuyugrass visit www.stoverseed.com

