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KENBLUE KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS

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Since the early 19th century the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky has had a world-wide reputation for its Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis* L.). As early as 1835, people from adjoining states visited the region to see its luxuriant fields and to learn of the culture and management of this valuable grass. This interest has led to the development of a profitable seed industry in central Kentucky. Kentucky produced the bulk of Kentucky bluegrass seed for the nation during the latter half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries.

Since 1960, foreign importation and competitive production of seed in the North-western region of the United States have resulted in a drastic decline in production of Kentucky bluegrass seed.

Kentucky bluegrass grown from seed of Kentucky origin has been consistently superior in performance to all named varieties and to seed of foreign origin in tests located on the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Farm at Lexington. This has been largely due to resistance to diseases and insects, a characteristic that is very important to good growth of Kentucky bluegrass.

The following table shows tolerance to sod webworm injury, color changes, and foliar diseases when Kenblue is compared with two imported seed lots of common Kentucky bluegrass and with three named varieties.

Table 1. -- Comparison of Kenblue with other Bluegrass varieties

Variety	Webworm Injury ^{1/}			Fol. Dis. ^{2/}	Color Changes ^{2/}		
	1964	1965	1966	1962	July 1962	July 1963	June 1964
Kenblue	3.1	2.5	2.9	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.5
Common - Holland grown	4.5	3.0	3.5	7.4	7.4	4.0	2.0
Common - Denmark grown	4.0	3.3	3.7	6.6	8.1	5.0	3.5
Merion	3.5	3.0	3.8	8.5	---	5.5	2.0
Delft	3.4	3.9	4.3	8.6	9.2	3.0	1.5
Newport	3.4	4.3	3.3	5.0	5.1	5.5	7.0
L. S. D. ^{3/}	---	0.5	0.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.0

^{1/} Rating of 1=least, 5=most.

^{2/} Rating of 1=least diseased or best color, 9=most diseased or brown color.

^{3/} Least significant difference at 0.05 level.

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Because increasing quantities of seed of named varieties and of foreign origin are being produced, there is a danger, if demand for them declines, that this seed may appear on the market as common Kentucky bluegrass. Thus, a need exists to protect Kentucky bluegrass of Kentucky origin from contamination by seed of named varieties or foreign origin. The Kenblue variety was developed for this purpose.

Kenblue is a blend of seed from farms located in most of the counties in the area of Central Kentucky that produced bluegrass seed. Fields from which the seed was harvested were over 8 and under 15 years of age. The farms that produced the seed had been established with Kentucky-grown seed for numerous generations. The particular ages of sod were selected to insure that only seed of Kentucky origin would be used to produce the Kenblue variety.

Certified seed will guarantee the consumer a known source of propagating materials.

CERTIFICATION

The Kenblue variety will have seed produced on a limited generation basis. Classes of seed are (1) breeder, (2) foundation, and (3) certified. Foundation seed will be used to produce certified seed. The certified class of seed can be planted for turf and forage purposes only and cannot be used to grow certified seed.

Further information may be obtained from the Kentucky Seed Improvement Association, 929 South Limestone, Lexington, Kentucky 40506. You may buy certified seed through your local seed dealer.

MANAGEMENT FOR LAWN AND TURF PURPOSES

Kentucky bluegrass should be seeded on a well-prepared, firm seedbed, at the rate of 1-1 1/2 pounds per 1,000 sq.ft. and covered lightly. It may be seeded in early fall or spring. If seeded in spring, the pre-emergence herbicide, siduron (Tupersan), can be used to prevent competition from warm seasonal annual grasses that may become competitive with the young bluegrass seedlings and, thus, prevent stand establishment. After planting, good stands are best obtained if the seedbed can be kept moist until the seedlings are well established.

Prior to seeding, the soil should be limed and fertilized according to soil tests to correct deficiencies in regard to pH, phosphorus, and potassium. Elemental nitrogen should be applied at the rate of one pound per 1,000 sq.ft. either before or at the time of seeding in the form of a complete fertilizer, or alone if phosphorus and potassium are not required. Once the stand is established, nitrogen fertilizer should be applied at the rate of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq.ft. during the spring, summer, and fall to keep the grass in a vigorous growing condition. Phosphorus and potassium should be applied as a maintenance fertilizer approximately once each year at the rate of 1 pound of P_2O_5 and K_2O per 1,000 sq.ft.

The grass should be mowed once each week during the growing season. It develops best when clipped to a height of 2 1/2 to 3 inches during the spring and summer and to a height of approximately 2 inches during the fall season.

Insects and weeds may become a problem in Kentucky bluegrass sods. Recommendations for the control of weeds may be obtained from U. of Ky. Coop. Ext. Serv. Misc. 322-A, "Weed Control Recommendations for Established Bluegrass Turf."

Instructions for insect control may be found in U. of Ky. Coop. Ext. Serv. Misc. 358, "White Grubs and Their Control," and in Misc. 363, "Sod Webworms and Their Control."

MANAGEMENT FOR PASTURES

Kentucky bluegrass is a valuable pasture species, and Kenblue provides palatable, nutritious forage for this purpose.

Kenblue is recommended in mixtures with alfalfa, clovers, or other legumes for pastures. It is best to sow this seed in early fall at the rate of 12 to 20 pounds per acre. Sow the bluegrass seed on a firm seedbed and cover lightly.

Before planting the seed, the soil should have been properly treated (based on soil tests) to correct any deficiencies of lime, phosphorus, and potassium.

The grass should be kept grazed or mowed to a height of 2 to 6 inches for greatest production.

(All of the preceding information on Kenblue Kentucky Bluegrass may be found in U. of Ky. Coop. Ext. Serv. Leaf. 308, "Kenblue Kentucky Bluegrass.")