

Zoysia Grass



Zoysia grass is a warm season grass, which originated in tropical eastern Asia. Long, hot summers provide the best growing conditions for Zoysia grass. Under proper weather conditions, it will give an almost maintenance-free lawn. Also, it is low growing, requires few mowings, is very dense, and wear-tolerant. With its preference for hot weather, Zoysia stays green during the hot summer months when Kentucky bluegrass and red fescue turn brown. Although it is well adapted for the Southern Ohio, Illinois and Kansas regions, it is not well adapted to Michigan.

Two varieties frequently advertised are "Meyer" zoysia and "Emerald" zoysia. In Michigan, zoysia begins growth very slowly in the spring. During hot weather, it makes rapid growth and then goes off color with the first frost in the fall. It is usually brown from late August to late May. Unlike the cool season grasses (Kentucky bluegrass, fescues, and ryegrasses), zoysia does not develop chlorophyll when temperatures are cool.

The cool season grasses, on the other hand, grow best at temperatures of 60 to 75 degrees F. In Michigan, this may be most of the summer.

Zoysia grass grows best when daytime temperatures are 90 degrees F or higher. In Michigan, this weather occurs usually only in July and August. During the remainder of the growing season, the zoysia suffers. If injured in any way, it is very slow to recover and often will form a thick thatch.

Planted vegetatively, using sprigs or plugs on two foot centers, establishment will take up to three to five years to cover an area. During this time, crabgrass and other weeds thrive in the open areas and make a very unattractive appearance of the area.

In summary, Zoysiagrass is usually a less than satisfactory lawn grass for the following reasons:

- 1) Slow rate of establishment and slow growth in cool weather
- 2) Off color during most of the year

3) Slow recovery from injury and thatch accumulation

Although Kentucky bluegrasses, fescues and ryegrasses will not produce a "carefree" lawn, they are better adapted to Michigan and will give a much better overall turf area.

Would you like additional information?

Additional information is available on-line. Please see [MSU Extension-Oakland County's publications](#) as well as [MSU Extension's Bulletin Office](#) on campus.

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