

# Local Factors Determine Best Turf

One of the most common questions I hear from readers this time of year is "What kind of grass should I plant in my yard?"

That question is nearly impossible for me to answer because so many factors come into play.

In order for you to determine which grass is best for your yard, consider the following:

- Do you enjoy working with your lawn?
- Do you have heavy traffic in your yard (ie: children, dogs)?
- Is your yard heavily shaded?
- Do you have an in-ground irrigation system?
- What soil type predominates in your yard?
- Do you have adequate drainage?

The answers to these questions will help guide you in selecting a turf grass. Each species of turf grass has advantages and disadvantages.

The only logical way to choose a turf grass that will function best for your yard is to understand the characteristics of the turf grasses best to this area.

The best adapted turf grasses for southeastern North Carolina coastal plains area all perennial warm-season grasses.

Examples of these grasses include centipede, bermuda, zoysia, St. Augustine, carpet and bahia.

For the average homeowner, I do not recommend any of the cool-season perennial turf grasses (ie: tall or red fescues, Kentucky blue grass, bent grass, perennial rye grass) because of the high incidence of disease problems and drought (heat) stress during the summer months.

You can grow orange trees in Alaska easier than cool-season turf grass in the sandy, coastal plains of North Carolina.

## THE PLANT DOCTOR

C. BRUCE WILLIAMS  
Extension Area  
Turf Specialist



### Characteristics of Popular Warm Season Grasses

St. Augustine grass is a coarse-textured grass that does well in moist but well-drained, slightly acidic (pH 6 to 6.5) sandy soils. It is the most shade tolerant of all the warm season grasses. However, it is also one of the least cold tolerant.

St. Augustine grass will require moderate fertilization to produce a beautiful deep green lawn. This grass is especially susceptible to chinchbug damage in the hot summer months. Routine overseeding with annual rye grass is not recommended with this grass.

St. Augustine grass can be propagated by seeding, plugs or sod. The best cultivar for this area is called Raleigh and must be established either by plugs or sod.

Centipede grass is a medium textured, slow-growing grass that prefers infertile, acidic soils (pH 5.2 to 5.8). This grass will not tolerate heavy traffic and is prone to winter kill if improperly fertilized.

Centipede grass produces a yellow lime-green turf and is generally considered to be a minimum maintenance lawn grass.

This grass is susceptible to a presently incurable insect problem

called ground pearl.

Routine overseeding with annual rye grass will cause severe thinning and potential loss of the established grass. Centipede grass can be established by seeding, plugs or sod.

Bermuda grass is a fine-textured, fast-growing grass that tolerates a wide range of soil types, but prefers a soil with pH 6 to 6.5. It will tolerate heavy traffic and makes an ideal groundcover for lawns, athletic fields, golf courses and high traffic commercial sites.

Bermuda grass will produce a high quality turf, but requires one of the highest levels of maintenance (frequent mowing, fertilization, aeration, etc.). It will not tolerate shaded sites.

This grass can be routinely overseeded with annual rye grass.

The sterile hybrids (Tiflawn, Tifway, Tifwarf, Tifgreen and Vamont) offer the best lawn turf grass cultivars. Seeded bermuda grass cultivars tend to become invasive into flower and shrub beds.

Zoysia grass is a grass in transition. Historically, the zoysia grasses (there are three species and numerous hybrids) have been thought of as high quality, high maintenance, slow-growing, somewhat shade tolerant grasses with excellent wear tolerance. However, this view is changing.

Grass breeders across the country are beginning to release new cultivars of zoysia grass that break with all the traditional thinking about this

grass. N.C. State University is conducting variety trials with 24 new cultivars of zoysia grass and believe me, some of these cultivars are extremely unique.

However, it will be years before these grasses are ready for commercialization. Until then, sod or plugs can be used to propagate the cultivars Emerald, Meyer or Cashmere.

Seeded zoysia grasses are available, but are untested in this area.

The zoysias are best mowed with a reel mower and can be routinely overseeded with annual rye grass. A well-maintained zoysia grass yard is a beautiful sight (site) to behold.

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Gourd growers take note! One reader writes in to tell readers that the Purple Martin Conservation Association gives away free gourd seed for people interested in growing this plant to provide homes for purple martins.

If you are interested, send a SASE with two first-class stamps affixed to the Purple Martin Conservation Association, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, Pa. 16444.

Another reader writes that the Charles G. Hart Seed Company (Wethersfield, Conn. 06109) has an excellent selection of gourd cultivars.

Send your comments and questions to The Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422. If requesting information or a reply, please enclose a SASE.

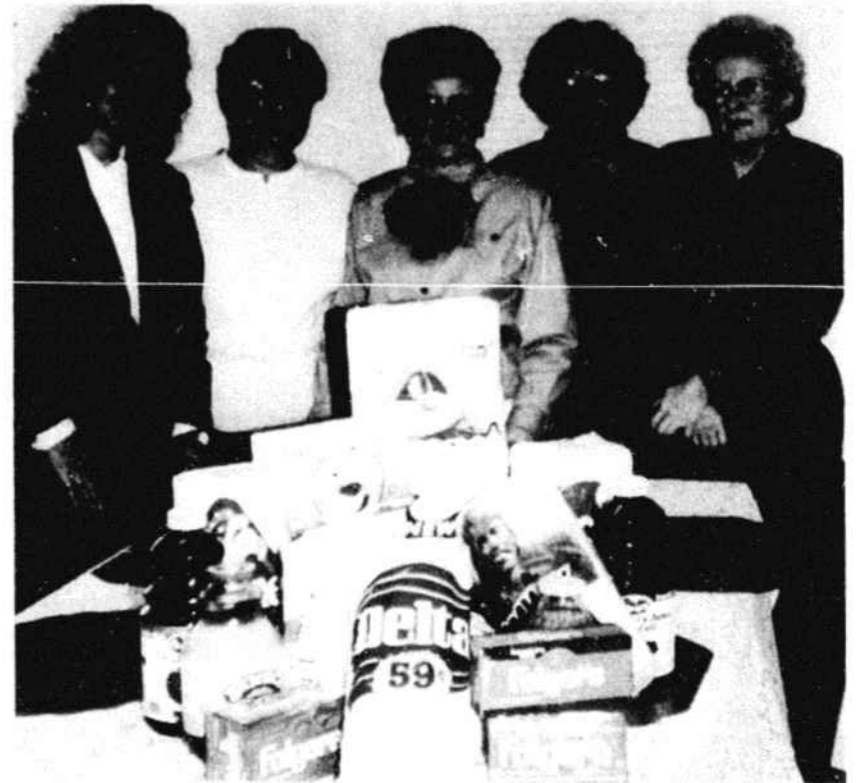


PHOTO BY ISOBEL BEEBE

SHALLOTTE AREA EXTENSION homemakers "showered" Brunswick Adult Day Care Center with paper products and other needed supplies recently. Shown above are (from left) are Cheryl Sullivan, Eleanor Hoff, Jean Marshall, Jean Mearns and Lena Mintz.

## Homemakers Shower Adult Care Centers With Paper Products

The Beachcombers (Shalotte) unit of Brunswick County Extension Homemakers held a "paper shower" for Brunswick Adult Day Care Centers in Shalotte and Southport.

Members donated supplies of bathroom tissue, paper towels and other items used at the centers, such as coffee, cocoa and juices.

In addition, the Brunswick County Extension Homemakers County Council voted recently to donate funds to each of the two sites, with President Eleanor Hoff presenting checks to Jean Marshall, executive director of the centers, and Cheryl Sullivan, activities director at the Southport center.

The extension homemakers are encouraging other organizations to support the adult day care program

through donation of items such as those above as well as others: garbage bags, dish detergent, sugar, powdered creamer, and juices liked by participants such as cranberry, cranberry-apple, grape and apple.

Participants at both sites enjoy playing bingo and small prizes suitable for men and women are welcomed items.

Jean Mearns, vice president of the Beachcombers club, and her husband, Alex, recently provided cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training for volunteers who work with participants at both adult day care sites. Both are certified instructors.

State law requires that at least one person who has received CPR training and holds a certificate be present when the center is in operation.

## CEDAR GROVE AREA NEWS

### Two Recovering From Illness

BY BARBARA T. HEWETT

The Cedar Grove community has undergone some anxious moments this week as its concerns were turned to two of its favorite citizens, Mattie Lane Hewett and Ethel Grissett.

Ms. Hewett, a former columnist for the Cedar Grove area, has returned home after a stay in New Hanover Regional Medical Center. She appears to be recovering from her illness.

Ms. Grissett is still a patient at New Hanover where she had surgery for a broken hip Feb. 23.

#### Reaching Out

Viola Gore was hostess of a Group I mission outreach service attended by Christabell Bryant, Ada Fullwood, Etta Hewett and Hattie Chapman. They also visited the home of Josie Mae McMillan, who is shut-in at this time.

Group II met in the home of Azalle Johnson. Those present were Pencie Grissett, Magdeline Johnson and Lena Johnson. They tell of an inspiring time of fellowship.

#### Women's Union

With 14 churches, Cedar Grove only gets to host the Ocean View Woman's Union once every three years. This has caused an air of fascination and excitement to all of the citizens in the community.

Even non-churchgoers can be seen riding with Willie Calvin

Bryant in his pickup truck on their way to clean the sanctuary and kitchen of the Cedar Grove Church in preparation for serving as host for the Woman's Baptist Home and Foreign Missionary Convention for worshippers from Brunswick and Columbus counties.

It will begin Saturday, March 8, 9:30 a.m., with a devotion by the senior department and greetings by President Irene Hankins. Cloixie Stanley of Pleasant Hill in Shalotte will lead the praise service, and Rose Gardner of New Mount Zion in Columbus County will give a response.

Ruby Bryant, secretary, will conduct a roll call and Mary Bernard of St. James in Bolivia will introduce Arabella Davis or alternate Etherine Butler to discuss the theme, "The Family of Life and Its Ministries."

The Rev. Charles Jacob will give the morning message and the Rev. Moses Herring closing remarks, with music by the mass senior choir. In charge of music are Arvella Marlowe and Louise Gause of Pleasant Grove in Thomasboro; Dorothy Lee Frink of Little Prong in Ash; and Felicia Stanley of Zion Plain in Nakina.

#### Youth Honored

The Cedar Grove Improvement Association and Missionary Department have chosen Richard "Rick" Bernard, son of Samuel and Uzena Bernard, as youth of the month.

The Shalotte Middle School student was chosen for accompanying the groups in music at convalescent homes. His hobbies are hunting and music.



### Queen And King Of Hearts

Maggie Diane Sellers (left) and Jerek O. Hewett were named Valentine queen and king, respectively, of the Cedar Grove Head Start Center for their outstanding donations raised for the facility. Miss Sellers, daughter of Robert and Diane Sellers, collected \$207, while Hewett, son of Elandrea Janelle Hewett, raised \$211.10. Other noted collectors were Matthew Ferster, Laura Lewis, Julius D. Melvin, Freddie Hankins, Danielle Humphries, Joshua Burcham, Angie Sellers, Dennis Hewett and Jamie Pherson.

## B I N G O

Thursday Nights • Doors Open 6:15 pm  
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Calabash VFW Post 7288  
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OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
Games begin at 7:30 PM  
Minimum "Buy In" \$5.00  
Minimum Pay Out \$600.00  
Snacks Available • No Children under 12

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Most Insurances Accepted  
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Opening the '92 season with...

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- Handcrafted jewelry
- Expanded candy counter
- Designer fragrance candles
- Unique all-occasion cards

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- Ladies' casual clothing
- Beachwear
- Beach jewelry
- Turtles and more tees
- Etc.

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### CROSSROADS

Friday and Saturday Night  
No Cover

### SUNDAY SPECIAL

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## Grand Opening

Diane Nolan, owner, formerly of LaCoquille announces the opening of

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