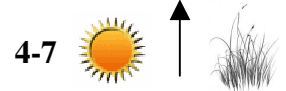


Buffalo Grass



- **Category:** Lawn
- **Type:** Perennial
- **Exposure:** Full Sun
- **Foliage:** Dark Green
- **Form:** Fine Texture
- **Zones:** 4 to 7
- **Drought Tolerance:** High
- **Scientific Name:** *Buchloe dactyloides*
- **Usage:** Groundcover



Introduction

Buffalo Grass is a perennial grass native to the Great Plains from Montana to Mexico. In Texas, it is commonly found from South Texas to the Texas Panhandle, but is rarely found on the sandy soils in the eastern part of the state or in high rainfall areas of southeast Texas. It is one of the grasses that supported the great herds of buffalo that roamed the Great Plains. Buffalo grass also provided the sod from which the early settlers built their houses.

Use and Management

Buffalo grass is recommended for full sun turf grass areas and stands up well to wear. It is best utilized on lawn areas that require minimal watering, perhaps in out-lying areas on commercial sites. It is becoming more popular with city zoning requirements in water-restricted areas. Irrigation can be beneficial in establishing stands and in keeping attractive and serviceable turf. Improperly done, watering can cause the buffalo grass to be overrun by other grasses and broadleaf weeds. This low growing grass requires little mowing to give it a uniform appearance. Buffalo grass has a low fertility requirement, and it often will maintain good density without supplemental fertilization. Because of its rather aggressive runner, buffalo grass can require edging along walks, drives, and shrub and flowerbeds. It has poor shade tolerance. To keep a better looking turf, and one that will provide better surface for general use, deep watering every two weeks or so during dry spells can be helpful. The soil should be soaked 6 to 8 inches deep. Low growing buffalo grass needs only infrequent mowing. Left un-mowed it will get to a height of 4 to 5 inches. Mow with a sharp blade, at a height of about one inch. The buffalo grass should be mowed to reduce the height of the grass by no more than 1/3 to 1/2 of its total height. In late spring, mowing may need to be done every two weeks. Later in the season mowing every 3 to 4 weeks will be adequate.

Planting

Buffalo grass is established from seed or sod. Buffalo grass established from seed develops into patches of male and female plants, with the male plant producing the seed stalks that may appear unsightly in lawns. Prairie and 609 buffalo grasses are female plant selections released by the Texas and Nebraska Agricultural Experiment station in 1990. Prairie and 609 buffalo grasses must be established from sod or sod plugs.

