

Bermuda Grass, Bahama Grass, najim, najeel

GENERAL

Origin	: temperate, sub-Mediterranean, Mediterranean
Vigour	: normal growth rate
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: direct sowing, division
Maintenance	: high

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: resistant
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: very high (11000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -18°C

SHAPE

Type	: grasses
Height	: 0.03 m-0.3 m
Spread	: 0.2 m-0.8 m
Foliage	: semi-evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: green, light brown
Size	: 7 cm
Period	: March - December

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: caryopsis
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Bermuda Grass, sometimes called Bahama Grass (najeel in Arabic), is by far the most common lawn grass used in Arriyadh and Saudi Arabia. It is very tolerant of heat, sun, saline water and poorly draining soils and is also relatively free of pests and diseases, enabling it to survive where few other grasses do. The grass blades are a grey-green colour and usually 2 to 15 cm long. The erect flower stems grow to 30 cm tall; the seed heads are produced in a cluster of spikes. *C. dactylon* has a deep root system: it creeps along the ground and roots wherever a node touches the soil, thus forming a dense mat. It reproduces through seeds and runners. Optimum growth occurs from 25 to 35°C. It will not tolerate full shade, e.g. under trees. Excellent turf can be achieved if the grass is regularly irrigated, fertilised and mown. There are many fine-textured hybrid Bermudas, the best known being the 'Tif' series. Stolonising is the fastest way of establishing a turf. Sodding is very common with many turf farms in Arriyadh. Rolls of mature turf are laid down; it is more expensive, but the effect is immediate. Bermuda Grass, when brown and dormant in Arriyadh in winter, can be overseeded in autumn with a quick-growing winter grass, which dies back as the heat builds up, keeping the turf green. This is a relatively intensive treatment, not often carried out. With the habit of spreading into other areas of groundcover and gravel, its weedy nature makes it very maintenance-intensive. It is fast growing and tough, making it useful for sports fields.

