

Buffalo Grass, *St. Augustine Grass*

GENERAL

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

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: high
Salinity/ppm	: high (5000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: grasses
Height	: 0.03 m-0.15 m
Spread	: 0.1 m-0.3 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: light brown
Size	: 12 cm
Period	: June - July

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: caryopsis
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St. Augustine Grass or Buffalo Grass, originating in South Africa, is popularly used for lawns in tropical and subtropical regions. In Arriyadh, it has proved to be excellent for planting under trees, because it tolerates shade and remains lush green during winter. The grass stolons or runners form a dense mat of leaves and flattened stems up to 20 cm high with erect, branching culms up to 50 cm; the leaves are stiff with broad, flat blades rounded at the tips. *S. secundatum* grows in well or poorly drained soils, from sandy loams to light clays; its habitat is on calcareous sands near the sea. Able to survive with low fertility, it requires lawn fertilising to look good. It is tolerant of soil salinity and is moderately drought-tolerant, though prefers regular irrigation. It is more tolerant of cold and frost than many tropical grasses; it is available in varieties bred for their shade and cold tolerance as well as resistance to pests and diseases: e.g. Captiva (R), Sapphire and Seville. Typically propagated by plugs, sprigs or turf, seed is now available commercially. St Augustine is excellent for private garden lawns in Arriyadh, although it is less drought-tolerant than Bermuda grass. *S. secundatum* is prone to a range of nematodes and fungal diseases such as brown patch, grey leaf spot, and St. Augustine Decline caused by a mosaic virus. A low- to medium-maintenance grass, it keeps down most weeds and other grasses. Extremely tolerant of mowing, it makes a good ground cover for soil conservation and sand stabilisation.

