

# Creating a Tougher Turf

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## Lower Water Use “Typical” Turf Mix

- **Drought Tolerant Kentucky Bluegrass**
  - Durable
  - Heat tolerant
  - Fine texture
  - Long lasting turf
  - Best in full sun
  - Requires water and fertilizer
  - Requires frequent mowing
- **Perennial Ryegrass**
  - Durable
  - Resistant to Necrotic Ring Spot
  - Best in full sun
  - Short lived
  - Medium drought tolerance
- **Creeping Red Fescue**
  - Rhizomatous
  - Lower growing
  - Fine Texture
  - Grows well in shade
  - Lower water use
  - Lower water and fertilizer requirements

- **Hard Fescue, Sheep Fescue, Chewing Fescue**
  - Medium drought tolerance
  - Fine texture
  - Likes sun but shade tolerant
  - Bunchgrasses (clumpy)
  - Lower fertilizer requirements
- **Turf type tall fescue**
  - Drought tolerant
  - Courser texture
  - Lower fertilizer need, but responds well to fertilization

## Blends

- **Low Grow Mix**
  - 40% Perennial Ryegrass
  - 40% Creeping Red Fescue
  - 20% Turf Type Hard Fescue
- **Low Maintenance Mix**
  - 40% Turf Type Hard Fescue
  - 40% Turf Type Sheep Fescue
  - 20% Canada Bluegrass

## Creating a Sustainable Turf

- Water only when your grass needs it
- Water deeply (not frequently) to encourage deep root growth
  - Kentucky Bluegrass 6-8” deep
  - Most other turf grasses 8-12” deep
  - Native grasses 12”+
    - Water for 15 minutes
    - After 18-24 hours dig a small hole or use soil probe to determine how far the water soaked in
    - Calculate amount of time needed to water to reach desired depth
- Set mower higher
  - Most grasses can be mown at 2.5-3” height
- Use mulching mower
- Aerate

## Drought Tolerant Turf Alternatives

- Streambank Wheatgrass
  - Very drought tolerant
  - Rhizomatous
  - Course texture
- Prairie Junegrass
  - Very drought tolerant
  - Bunchgrass
  - Early spring green up
  - Seed is very expensive

- Idaho Fescue
  - Drought Tolerant
  - Low growing bunchgrass
  - Variable in color – usually bluish

### Blends

- Water Less Lawn
  - 35% Streambank Wheatgrass
  - 25% Idaho Fescue
  - 20% Blue Gramma
  - 15% Canby Bluegrass
  - 5% Prairie Junegrass

## Non Grass Alternatives

- Yarrow
  - Very drought tolerant
  - Mow to keep from flowering
  - Soft texture
  - Cannot use chemical broadleaf weed control
- Clovers
  - White Dutch Clover is best for turf type
  - Nitrogen fixing
  - Cannot use chemical broadleaf weed control
  - New variety is MicroClover
    - More drought tolerant
    - Low growing
- Warm Season Grasses
  - Buffalograss, Zoysia, Bermuda
  - As a rule, don't do well in our area
    - Green only in summer
    - Very slow to establish

## Establishing Turf

- Seed in early spring for water conservation
- Good seed to soil contact
- Mulch
- Use a starter fertilizer at the recommended rate
- Water for establishment
- Shallow frequent watering to establish root system and then slowly adapt watering habits to establish deep rooting
- Mow to fill in more quickly and reduce annual weeds