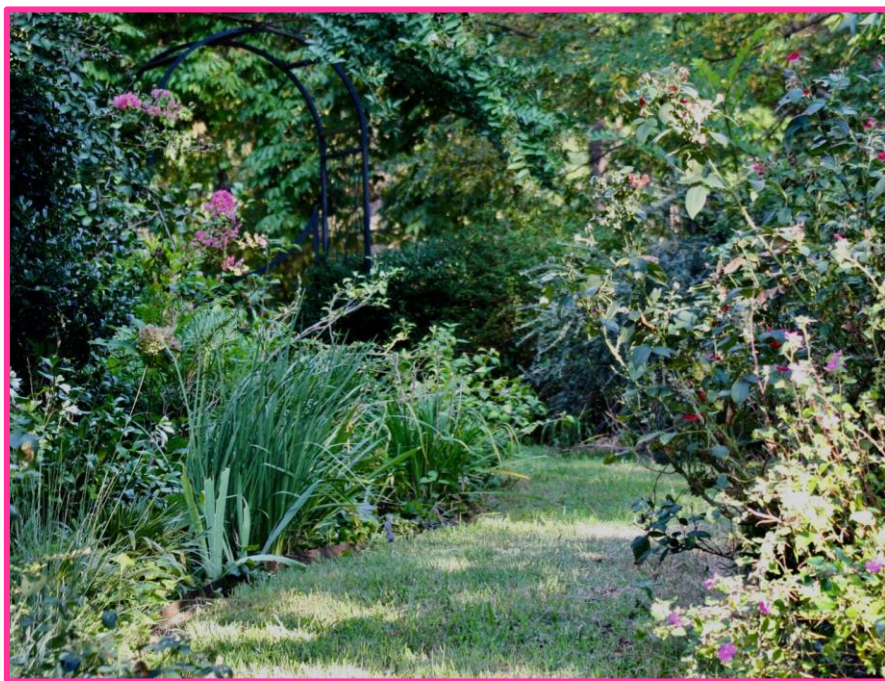


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## Get an Emerald Lawn

By Lydia Holley, Master Gardener



A lush emerald-green lawn is the perfect backdrop to blooming ornamentals. Well-maintained grass is also a delight to walk on. There are several types of grasses available to the homeowner in East Texas; choose the right one for your needs.

One popular Texas native turf-grass is Buffalo. In the past, roaming buffalo ate it, and settlers used it to build sod houses. Unfortunately, it is not usually found in East Texas due to our high annual rainfall and sandy soil.

Warm season grasses appropriate to East Texas are Bermuda, Centipede, St. Augustine, and Zoysia. Native to Asia, Zoysia is an extremely slow grower. If you start it with plugs, be prepared to wait years for it to fill in to a lush lawn.

St. Augustine grass is native to various areas including the region around the Gulf of Mexico, which explains its need for irrigation. St. Augustine is partially shade tolerant, growing in as little as four hours of sun. Mow St. Augustine grass at two to four inches in height.

Centipede grass is less drought tolerant than St. Augustine. Native to Asia, Centipede grows slowly, so it may be desirable if you hate to mow. However, it does not go completely dormant, so an extended cold or fluctuating freezing temperatures can kill it.

Native to Africa, Bermuda grass is drought tolerant but not shade tolerant. If you have common Bermuda, mow at two to four inches high, but if you have planted a hybrid type, one and one-half to three inches in mowing height is usually recommended.

Warm season grasses reduce growth in winter, so when they are actively growing in summer is the recommended time for fertilizer application. Approximately 60% of nitrogen should be applied in summer, with 30% in spring and 10% in fall. Slow release fertilizers are generally best for grasses. The recommended fertilizer amount varies with each type of grass, so a soil test is encouraged. Get a test kit by calling the County Extension Office at the number listed below.

If you want pretty grass, you will have to do some maintenance. Regularly mowing with sharp blades, watering when applicable, and watching for disease are necessary steps for maintaining a beautiful lawn. But when you walk barefoot across a lush, soft, green carpet of grass, all your hard work will be worth it.

*For more information, call 903-675-6130, email [hendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com), or visit [txmq.org/hendersonmq](http://txmq.org/hendersonmq).*