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## How to Kill Bermuda Grass

Prior to scheduling a turf conversion (removing lawn and replacing it with landscape plants), the lawn area to be killed must be assessed for the presence of Bermuda grass. If this weed is present, it is very important that it be controlled (killed) prior to the removal of the grass, or else the weed will grow right back after the installation of the new landscape. Re-growth of Bermuda grass into a new landscape can be very problematic and exceedingly difficult to control. It is much easier to kill these weeds prior to the new landscape being installed. If Bermuda grass is not present, the turf can be removed mechanically (by hand or with a sod-cutter). As temperatures must be high (over 90 degrees Fahrenheit) to effectively kill the Bermuda grass, perform the grass kill in the months of June to September (ideally in July and August).

### Identifying Bermuda Grass

The older the lawn, the more likely it is to have Bermuda grass. Bermuda grass is most easily identified by its tendency to produce “runners” (stolons), as well as the presence of distinct 4-armed seed heads that become apparent about 1 week after mowing.



Bermuda grass runner (stolon)



Bermuda grass with 4-armed seed head

### Pre-Treatment (~1 week to 10 days prior to treatment)

- Water turf as usual for a summer watering schedule for at least 1 month prior to treatment.
- Stop mowing the grass; new, fresh grass growth is more receptive to herbicide. If the grass growth is more than 2 weeks' worth, however, the grass will be less receptive to the treatment.
- Fertilize turf with a Nitrogen fertilizer approximately 2 weeks before spraying (Nitrogen is represented by the first number on a bag of fertilizer, as in 21-0-0).
- Do not water at all the day of the treatment, and for 1-2 days before treatment.

## Application of the Herbicide Glyphosate (Round-Up)

**WARNING: Round-up is a herbicide and should be treated with caution.**

- **Read and follow all instructions on all chemical labels! *Chemical label instructions supersede all instructions in this document!***
- Always wear safety glasses when spraying, and especially when mixing the chemicals.
- Wear gloves, long pants, and long sleeves to avoid coming in to contact with the herbicide.
- Walk backwards when applying the herbicide, walking into areas not yet sprayed, and spraying behind you as you go.

**Step 1:** Determine the size of the area to be sprayed, size of the application equipment, and the amount of chemical and additives needed.

**Step 2:** Pre mix additive (21-0-0 at 1 Tbsp/gallon, 34-0-0 at ½ Tbsp/gallon, or other water-soluble high Nitrogen fertilizer) with 2-4 cups of water in a separate container. Mix to a state of solution (completely dissolved).

**Step 3:** Add water to spray tank. Fill to 1/2 to 2/3 full.

**Step 4:** Add 4 tablespoons of vinegar or lemon juice for each gallon of spray mix. This brings down the pH of the spray mix, making the plant more receptive to it.

**Step 5:** Add marking dye if desired, usually mixed at 1 oz. for each gallon of spray mix.

**Step 6:** Add in fertilizer solution from Step 2. This feeds the plant and makes it more “eager” to pull the spray mix in.

**Step 7:** Add glyphosate (Round-up Pro or another brand) to the tank at a rate as described on the label. If a range of rates is offered on the label, use at or near the highest rate.

**Step 8:** Fill tank with the remainder of the water to the amount of spray mix desired.

**Step 9:** Spray all Bermuda grass, saturating all foliage just to the point of run-off. Pressurize tank by hand-pumping to the point where an effective spray is the result. However, try to avoid over-pressurizing. More pressure results in smaller droplets (more of a mist), and is more likely to drift in breeze or wind. Keep the spray wand close to the ground, usually about 8-12” away. If spraying around other plants, use a cover of cardboard or similar. Prior to spraying, try to pull grass blades and runners out from the host plant to make them more accessible for spraying. If spray accidentally gets on the foliage of another plant, prune that part off immediately (for this reason, you should have hand pruners with you already). If wind speeds are high enough to potentially cause drift onto non-target plant material, do not spray!

**Step 10:** After all spraying is completed, rinse out all equipment using a chemical neutralizer (Nutra-sol or other brand – follow directions) into an approved drainage system, or onto bare dirt or another surface where it will be appropriately absorbed or harmlessly evaporate. Fill tank part way and pressurize, then spray some mix through tube and wand for at least 10-15 seconds to rinse that part of the equipment also. Repeat the rinse process twice more with just water. If you do not have a chemical neutralizer, use water only and do the rinse process three times.

### Post-Treatment

- Return to a normal watering schedule 1 day after treatment for 1 to 2 weeks.
- Any regrowth can be spot treated. You may have to wait until the following warm season for it all to show. For the purpose of spot treatment, sometimes a pre-mixed glyphosate product is easiest.
- If you require a second kill, it is best to do it no less than two months after the initial kill, and when daytime temperatures are above 85 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Resist the urge to pull the regrowth. Rather, wait until the runner(s) have grown to about 6-12” long, then cut the plant back to about 2”. Then allow it to regrow again (water, fertilizer, warm weather).
- When at approximately 4-8”, follow the above protocol.