

BUFFALO GRASS (ST. AUGUSTINE GRASS) 'B12'

Stenotaphrum secundatum

BREEDING INFORMATION (from Plant Breeder's Rights Database)

Characteristics Plant: perennial, stoloniferous grass, habit prostrate becoming erect when flowering, culms branched, glabrous. Stolon: roots at nodes, internode length (4th from tip) medium-long (mean 48.6mm), average internode length (internodes 4 to 6 from tip) medium-long (mean 50.4mm), colour yellow green (RHS 144A) at node changing to yellow green (RHS 148A) along internode diffuse with brown (RHS 200A) becoming predominantly brown (RHS 200A) on upper exposed side of internode with maturity. Leaf: sheath length medium (mean 19.1mm), colour green (RHS 138B), blade length medium (mean 20.2mm), blade width medium (mean 6.4mm), colour green (RHS 137A), apex acute. Inflorescence: spike - like panicle. (Note: all RHS colour chart numbers refer to 1995 edition).


Origin and Breeding Open Pollination: 'Sir Walter'. The parent is characterised by a long average internode length and intense purple internode colour. Selection took place in Clarendon, NSW in 2001. Selection criteria: greener internode colour and shorter internode length. Propagation: vegetative cuttings were found to be uniform and stable. Breeder: Todd Layt, Clarendon, NSW.

Choice of Comparators

The grouping characteristics used in identifying the most similar varieties of common knowledge were - Plant: main colour of stolon purple, Stolon: internode length medium-long. Based on this 'Sir Walter' and 'Shademaster' were selected as the most similar suitable comparators. 'SS100' syn 'Palmetto' was initially considered for the trial, but was excluded due to its green internode colour. 'ST85' was initially considered for the trial and was excluded due to its dark purple internode colour and shorter internode length. No other similar varieties were identified.

Comparative Trial Location: Clarendon, Spring-Summer 2002. Conditions: trial conducted in open beds, plants propagated from cutting, rooted cuttings planted into 140mm pots filled with soilless potting mix, nutrition maintained with slow release fertilisers, pest and disease treatments applied as required. Plants did not flower during trial. Trial design: thirty pots of each variety arranged in a completely randomised design. Measurements: from ten plants at random. One sample per plant.

COMPARATIVE TABLE FOR STENOTAPHARUM VARIETIES

| | 'B12'  | 'Sir Walter' | 'Shademaster' |
|--|---|-------------------------------|---------------|
| INTERNODE COLOUR (overall appearance) | purple with predominant green | dark purple with little green | dark purple |
| LEAF LENGTH (mm) - 4th node from tip | | | |
| mean | 20.2 | 17.2 | 15.2 |
| std deviation | 4.2 | 1.5 | 1.7 |
| LSD/sig | 3.13 | ns | P<0.01 |
| AVERAGE INTERNODE LENGTH (mm) - internodes 4 to 6 | | | |
| mean | 50.4 | 57.1 | 52.3 |
| std deviation | 4.6 | 4.8 | 2.9 |
| LSD/sig | 4.76 | P<0.01 | ns |



Performance

Sapphire buffalo grass has all the benefits of the other high performance soft leaf buffalo grass, such as: needing less water, deep roots, greener in Winter, good for sun or shade and it's hard wearing. However, Sapphire buffalo grass has the added benefit of a finer texture.

Sapphire buffalo grass does not rely on fine leaves for its fine texture, but its folding leaf. When Sapphire buffalo grass is mature, its leaf folds at tight angles along its axis, resulting in a fine texture. This is important, because fine leaf buffalo lawns usually have thatch problems, are shallow rooted, poor wearing and are slow growing. A Sapphire buffalo lawn does not suffer from these problems.

Not only is a Sapphire buffalo lawn hard wearing, due to its quick recovery from wear damage, but it is also shade tolerant like all other good varieties of buffalo grass. It is an easy grass to grow. What makes a Sapphire buffalo lawn different to other buffalo lawn varieties is its fine texture. Until now, fine textured buffalo lawns have been slow growing, and shallow rooted, but a Sapphire buffalo lawn is different. We believe it is the only fine textured, quick recovering buffalo grass in the world. And a Sapphire buffalo lawn also has excellent disease tolerance, and a great winter colour.

Specifications

Winter Colour: Excellent Winter colour in Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne (Provided it is fertilised in April). It will go dormant in colder areas such as Canberra, but it will hold its Winter colour better in Winter.

Hot Weather Tolerance: Excellent/Thrives in hot humid and desert areas.

Cold Tolerance: Tested down to minus 10 °C in Canberra.

Shade Tolerance: Moderate to good. Tests have shown it is similar to other Buffalo varieties.

Wear Resistance: Excellent, with very fast recovery.

Salt Tolerance: Good. Similar to other Buffalos.

Mowing Height: 35mm - 45mm in full sun, and 50mm to 60mm in the shade.

Recovery From Injury: Excellent, as it has fast growing stolons.

Use: Residential and commercial lawns, parks etc.

Root Structure: Deep rooted.

Drought Tolerance: Excellent once established, due to its deep root system.

Texture: Fine compared to other good buffalo grass varieties. Soft to touch.

Mechanicals

Internodes Length: 50.4mm average

Leaf width: 6.4mm average

Leaf colour: Colour green(RHS 137A)

Leaf length: 20.2mm average

So Fine So Soft

Just touch it, feel it, and look at it.

You will be impressed with a Sapphire Buffalo Lawn.

Characteristics

Out Competes Weeds

Due to the tight mat and high performance of Sapphire Buffalo Grass it leaves very little room for weeds to grow. It is excellent at out competing weeds. In the unlikely event that broad leaf weeds ever become a problem, a Sapphire Buffalo Lawn can be sprayed with Bromoxynil and MCPA, as it is resistant to these chemicals. Follow directions on the spray pack. **Remember never to use Dicamba on Buffalo grass.**

Fast Recovery

Sapphire Buffalo Grass has rapid growth across the ground. This high performance allows it to cope well with high traffic situations. In extra high wear areas it is recommended that you fertilise and water more than normal.

Best Looking Buffalo Lawn

Due to its fine texture, and the nice way the leaf sits, a Sapphire Buffalo Lawn looks superb. When Sapphire Buffalo Grass is mature its leaf tends to fold back giving a much finer appearance.

Sun and Shade

Like other buffalo grass, a Sapphire Buffalo Lawn is the answer for those maturing landscapes that have both shady and sunny areas.

Less Thatch

Sapphire Buffalo Grass is proving to be less spongy than other buffalo varieties.

Great Winter Colour

It takes quite a few frosts to send a Sapphire Buffalo Lawn off colour. The image at the left shows a Sapphire Buffalo Lawn with a heavy frost covering and the colour is still excellent.

Drought Tough Buffalo Grass

A Sapphire Buffalo Lawn has a very deep root system, which means it can hang on looking great with less frequent watering. In normal soils on the East Coast of Australia, a Sapphire Buffalo Lawn should only need watering in the warmer months, and in general once every few weeks should be enough, except in severe heat and drought conditions.

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