

## Overview

Princess has excellent turf qualities. This is a fine textured Bermuda hybrid, which compares excellently and is on par, with vegetative propagated Cynodon hybrids and is finer than Kikuyu.

Princess is even more dwarfed with an upright growth habit, providing a dense stand that tolerates low mowing (minimum 5mm). Summer leaf density is high compared to seeded varieties and similar to the vegetative varieties. Due to good wear tolerance the turf can withstand high traffic levels and will recover fast from damage.

Princess has good drought resistance with decreased water usage (19% - 29% less than other Cynodon varieties). It adapts to varying soil conditions and at maturity needs approximately half as much water as Kikuyu does to survive. Princess exhibits the highest percentage recovery rate of all the tested varieties from drought due to less leaf wilting. Recovery from drought induced dormancy is also fast.

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## Establishment

### When?

Spring and summer in frosty areas. In frost free areas, all year round, other than the coldest times of the year.

**Remove existing grass if the area is in full sun and other grasses were growing there before**, it is important to get rid of them properly before establishing a new lawn. The underground runners of creeping grasses can be very persistent so you can't simply dig it out.

It is best to spray the existing grass with a non-selective weed killer.

### Soil preparation

- If the soil is dry, water the area thoroughly a day or two before you begin soil preparation.
- **Spread Super Phosphate** at a rate of 50g\* per m<sup>2</sup> over the entire area (50 g is approx. one medium sized handful) \*This is a general recommendation, made in the absence of a soil test.
- Dig the area over incorporating the Super Phosphate to a depth of approximately 15 cm. At this point you could dig in some compost. This is not generally necessary and can cause problems if the compost contains weed seeds and is not well rotted. Never leave compost as a layer on top of the soil as it dries out far more easily than soil does, and will not allow the seed to stay moist enough during the critical germination period.
- Break down clods to create a **fine seedbed**
- Spread a **balanced** fertiliser such as 5:1:5 or 3:1:5 at 30 g per m<sup>2</sup> and rake into the surface of the soil.

### Sowing the seed

- Ensure that you have the right amount of seed, i.e. 1 kg per 100 m<sup>2</sup>.
- **Broadcast** the seed over the area as evenly as possible by hand, or by using a drop seeder (a fertiliser spreader will do, as long as you have checked that it does not crush the seed).
- To achieve an **even spread**, split the amount of seed in two, moving up and down with one half and across and back with the other.
- The seed is very small so you can mix it with sand to bulk it up.

### Covering the seed

Rake the area lightly (using a steel rake), so that most of the seed is covered by no more than 1 cm of soil. This seed needs light to germinate so don't bury it too deeply. Also, don't cover with a layer of compost as it dries out too easily and may prevent successful germination!

### Compacting

It is essential to compact the area lightly. If you don't have a roller, then use something like a drum on its side or simply trample lightly under foot. This step is very important, as it brings the seed into direct contact with moist soil, reduces wash-aways and initiates capillary action (the movement of water upwards through the soil profile).

### Watering

Keep the area **moist at all times for the first two weeks**. By then the seed will have germinated and watering frequency should be reduced. You may need to water more than once a day. Avoid puddles.

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## Maintenance

### Mowing

#### Start

- When grass is 50 mm long. Set the mower at its highest setting (no less than 32mm).

#### Height

- Sunny areas 5mm to 32mm (lower heights necessitate twice weekly mowing). 1/3 rd RULE - Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade at a time.

#### Frequency

- Generally once a week (more if cut shorter than 20mm).

### Irrigating

This grass can be maintained without an irrigation system. A shortage of water will result in the grass going dormant (brown). If water remains unavailable for a protracted period the grass may die.

Although this is a relatively drought tolerant grass at maturity, it still needs regular watering during

establishment. Irrigation can be reduced once the root system is established.

#### **Fertilisation**

50 g (approximately one handful) per m<sup>2</sup> of 5:1:5 or 3:1:5 three times a year.

Slow release formulations are recommended, as lawns do best when fertilised little and often.

#### **Pests and Diseases**

Take careful note of the symptoms, i.e. spots on leaves, size and location of patches etc. and phone the Sakata Seed Southern Africa's Helpline insert connection or speak to a specialist in this field.

Remember that insects and fungal **diseases know nothing about straight lines, so if you see straight lines look for a man-made problem!**

**Healthy, actively growing lawn is less susceptible to diseases and insects so don't skimp on fertilising (you can't avoid regular mowing!)**

**Good air flow reduces humidity and helps to avoid disease. Don't over water or underwater – both cause stress to all grasses.**

#### **Traffic**

Where traffic is excessive the pressure can be reduced by setting paving stones or sleepers into the grass and just mow over the top. This is a creeping grass and possess the ability to cover bare patches.

#### **Weeds**

The best way to avoid weeds is to have actively growing grass forming a dense canopy that does not allow light through to the soil surface. Fertilise and mow regularly and you will literally "cut out" the majority of problems. Ask a specialist before spraying a herbicide.

#### **Aerating and Top Dressing**

**Spiking or hollow tining:** Use a garden fork or tining fork on highly compacted areas. Push the whole length of the tine into the soil to get good water and air penetration.

**Top dressing:** Creeping grasses may be covered with a layer of soil or compost. This activity is primarily done to level areas.