

## Spring Transition: From Rye grass to Bermuda grass

Bermuda grass is a warm-season perennial grass with a creeping growth habits. Bermuda spreads both by stolons and rhizomes which readily root and tiller. All varieties of Bermuda grass turn to a straw color and become dormant during the winter which encourages communities and homeowners to overseed with Rye grass. Overseeding with Rye grass creates an esthetically pleasing community or yard by adding color and increasing wear tolerance of the Bermuda during winter months. However, Rye grass also competes with Bermuda during spring transition and significantly delays recovery of Bermuda grass.

Spring transition begins when *evening temperatures rise above 60 degrees* for several days and the *day time temperatures reach above 75 degrees*. This normally occurs in Arizona between the months of March and mid April. During this time, it is also the peak growing period of Rye Grass, so what do you do?

Here are 3 easy steps to follow:

1. Lower Mowing Heights: Rye grass will fill out thicker over the next couple of months shading out the Bermuda, slowing down the transition process. By gradually lowering mowing heights you will increase sunlight to the recovering Bermuda leaf.
2. Water Deep and Infrequent: As day time temperatures increase and the Rye grass begins to show signs of wilt, change your watering schedules to run longer and less frequent. Wetting the soil 6 to 8 inches deep will give the Bermuda a competitive edge over the Rye grass.
3. Fertilize: When Fertilize using a quick release Nitrogen that has a 1 to 1 Ratio of Nitrogen to Potassium (i.e. 17-17-17). Fertilize to maintain an acceptable color of turf during this time, apply once every 4-6 weeks until the Bermuda has fully recovered.

Keep in mind: during spring transition the Turf can be esthetically undesirable looking (i.e. hot spots, browning). Over watering will only prolong the transition, shorten the Bermuda grass growing season and affect the conditions of the next overseed season. Bermuda requires 100 days of noncompeting conditions before it is recommended for overseeding.