



Planting Centipede Grass from Seed

Centipede is an "Acid" loving plant just like Pine Trees and Azaleas. If the soil is alkaline, it could kill the plant. Be sure your customer hasn't limed. If he has, recommend a soil test. Centipede thrives in a 4.5 to 5.5 pH level. As a mature plant, centipede does not like strong, quick fertilizers. We recommend a time released product like "Scott's Turf Builder". Avoid weed and feed type fertilizers as they can injure immature grass. At maturity, centipede gets thick enough to keep weeds at bay. It doesn't require or like lots of water. At maturity, once a week, a good soaker is all it requires. In really wet areas, it will die. Be careful of areas where sewer systems spray water everyday on top of the ground, because of too much moisture and over fertilization can kill the Centipede. Wet areas like these also promote the Bermuda grass & will also hinder the growth of centipede. Mature Centipede is almost as shade tolerant as St. Augustine.

As a young plant, centipede will take (or not be harmed by) strong fertilizers, such as 13-13-13 Propell, which is what I use when planting. As a young plant it needs to be watered on a regular basis, twice a week, because of short roots while young. Centipede will take two months to germinate to a 1" plant (We show the customer the picture that comes with Centi-seed brand & cover the root zone with a finger to show how tall out of the ground after 60 days). The plant will spend the first growing season developing into a mature plant, and then will start running by the first of the second season. It will spend that entire season covering the area, and by the end of the second summer, will look like sod had been laid.

Centipede, because of its slow coverage, requires a "nurse crop" to be planted with it. This helps hold it in place while it is developing a root system. Of course, the growing traits of the nurse crop have to allow the centipede to grow in with it. This is why Common Bermuda is used primarily as its nurse crop during the summer. In winter, if Ryegrass is used, and we recommend over-seeding with Bermuda in May because some areas warm up too much in winter and allow Bermuda to germinate, then die the next

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freeze. We have been using a dwarf turf type of Fescue during early fall and early spring, which needs 50 degrees to germinate. Rye will germinate at 40 degrees and above, so use rye during colder weather. Fescue will last longer, stay greener, stay shorter and will thin out as it dies to allow smoother transitioning into summer. Do not use perennial rye. It grows too thick and prevents centipede from germinating.

Centipede will germinate at 60 degrees and above. Bermuda needs 70 degrees to germinate. We have found centipede to be very winter tolerant and in East Texas it never goes completely dormant.

Centipede benefits from being planted into soft soil because it requires soil contact. Even sand can be brought in and scattered over the top of soil (Be sure to kill all weeds first before any soil is applied). If contact with the soil is not made, seed can just lay there until it is in the right spot to germinate. Depending on soil contact, we have seen side by side, some plants a year old and others just germinating. Centipede also has hard seeds (slow germinating) and soft seeds that germinate quickly. We do recommend using 1# of seed per 1000 sq. ft. to get coverage at the end of the second growing season (homeowners want it ASAP). If you cut seed down to 1/2# per 1000 sq. ft., it will take 3 years to completion and at 1/4# per 1000 sq. ft. (as the package says) it will take 4 years. Commercial jobs are the only ones you might be able to cut seed on to save the customer money, because they have sprinkler systems, maintenance crews, very large areas (customers can save some real money, small jobs it doesn't pay to save a few dollars).

Commercial jobs are looking at it from afar, homeowners look at what is beneath their feet.

Completion of the project depends on the customer's care. For example: We had two customers side by side. Customer #1 really liked his yard, watered all the time, mowed, fertilized with a time release fertilizer but fertilized too much. Customer #2 worked on his race car mostly. He mowed and watered when he thought it needed it (didn't have sprinklers, fertilized when he thought about it) but mostly worked on his race car. Customer #1 asked one day (with a "best yard in neighborhood award" sign in his yard) why his neighbor's yard completed before his, even though he planted a month earlier.

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The reason was that he was watering too much, fertilizing too much and this promoted his Bermuda and gave more competition to the Centipede. He then cut back on everything and now is happy with his Centipede, but he had pushed back completion a full year.

Regarding warranties, we do not warranty Centipede except for the seed being good. We do warranty the cover crop and job from rain (3 month warranty).

Because the Centipede seed is so expensive, we make very little profit on it, we make our money on the service. We also show the customer how much seed we are using by figuring a basic job cost for Bermuda, then adding "x" number of pounds of Centipede at "x" amount, then total and add tax. This will show the customer that you are willing to tell them how much you are putting on the ground. It also shows that 1/3 of their cost is the cost of the centipede seed. This keeps them from thinking you are getting rich off of them. We do not add Centipede seed to the re-spray mix, unless customer wants to pay for more. With Centipede, you have enough seed on ground so if some washes, it will still complete and run into areas that washed; adding another dose of seed could break you or cause you to have to double the price of seed you are selling.

We have had some customers say "I can buy seed cheaper at Lowe's or some other store ". Tell these customers to be careful because most of these seeds are mixed with other seed or have been coated (49% inert matter, rather than .01%). They could be paying twice as much for the Centipede seed.

We hope this helps. Remember, to grow Centipede you must have patience.

If you have any further questions, please check the FAQ section of www.New-Grass.com or contact us at:

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