

A Conservation Plant Released by The Natural Resources Conservation Service Norman A. Berg National Plant Materials Center, Beltsville, MD

‘TUFCOTE’ Bermudagrass

Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers.

‘Tufcote’ bermudagrass is a cultivar released in 1962 by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, and Crops Research Division of the USDA Agricultural Research Service. Tufcote is PI number 477004.

Description

Tufcote a non-native, perennial warm-season grass that can withstand high grazing pressure and survive in heavy use areas of farms. The leaves are medium green, usually about 1/24 to 1/4 inch (1-5mm) wide, flat at maturity, and are about 2 to 12 inches (5-30cm) long. The grass has a low growth habit that forms a dense sod, spreading by stolons and rhizomes. Tufcote must be propagated vegetatively. Tufcote may flower in panicles with 4-6 branches, usually 1/2 inch to 2.5 inches (2-6cm) long, in a single whorl, but it has not produced viable seed in the Beltsville, MD area in over 20 years of observation.



Tuffcote’ bermudagrass, with a distinctive emerald green color, absent seedheads, and rooting node.

Source

Tufcote was developed from a single seedling that survived the MD winter at -17°F, from several collections by General Jan Smuts from Pretoria, South Africa in 1942.

Conservation Uses

Tufcote is recommended for high use areas. It has also been used for revegetating strip mine spoils.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Tufcote was developed for use in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the U.S. It is winter hardy to zone 6, holds its green better in the fall than other bermudagrass varieties, and turns straw color during the winter months.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Tufcote bermudagrass is best established through planting sprigs, plugs, or sod. It is important to keep new plantings moist until the plants are actively growing. For sprigs, planting can take place early spring until mid-summer, as long as the sprigs are fresh and not wilted. Sprigs can be planted with a sprig planter, disk punched, or covered with 1 to 2 inches of soil followed by irrigation. For fully established stands in one growing season, use 15-20 bushels per acre for early plantings or warm climates, and 25-30 bushels per acre for later plantings or in colder climates. For areas with high erosion or difficult growing conditions, use sod or plugs cut from sod. Three-inch plugs planted on 15 to 18-inch centers will ordinarily establish complete cover in one growing season with adequate fertilizer, moisture and sun.

High quality turf will require frequent low mowing (to 0.5 to 2 inches), and ample fertilizer and water. Good to fair quality turf can be maintained with low water and low fertilizer schedules and higher mowing heights, thereby reducing mowing frequency.

Ecological Considerations

Although Tufcote establishes rapidly in prepared beds, once established it spreads less aggressively compared to naturalized bermudagrass. Based on observation at Beltsville, MD, Tufcote does not invade adjacent established turf or gravel driveways as rapidly as the common strains of bermudagrass do.

Tufcote should only be used in areas where it will not eventually threaten natural areas. Bermudagrass is considered noxious in several states and invasive by several sources. Please check the Noxious and Invasive portion of PLANTS for additional information. Please consult with your local resource specialist prior to using Tufcote.

Tufcote can suffer from spring dead spot, but symptoms are ameliorated by application of ammonium sulfate and potassium chloride.

Seed and Plant Production

Tufcote does not reproduce from seeds; use sprigs instead to propagate plants.

Availability

Tufcote is being maintained by the USDA-NRCS National Plant Materials Center in Beltsville, MD. Sprigs are available to interested parties for research and increase purposes.

For More Information

Norman A. Berg National Plant Materials Center, 8791 Beaver Dam Rd., in Beltsville, MD 20705. 301-289-9775 (www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/mdPMC).

Citation

Release Brochure for Tufcote bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*). 2026. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Norman A. Berg National Plant Materials Center, Beltsville, MD.

For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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