



Establishing Tifton 85 Bermudagrass

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Tifton 85 was selected for improved nutritive value, high dry matter yield, and increased drought tolerance. Although Tifton 85 bermudagrass has been around for more than a decade, there are still many things not known about its management. Following is a summary of some of the factors regarding successful establishment and management of Tifton 85 bermudagrass.

- Initiate the planning process to establish Tifton 85 bermudagrass the year prior to actual planting.
- In late summer the year prior to planting, destroy existing perennial grass vegetation in the field with 5 quarts/acre of glyphosate.
- Begin initial seedbed preparation approximately two weeks after herbicide application and consider planting a small grain or ryegrass on the site to minimize soil erosion and provide winter/spring grazing for livestock.
- Obtain soil sample and apply recommended phosphorus (P) early during seedbed preparation. Apply the recommended limestone (ECCE approaching 100 if possible) later during seedbed preparation.
- Identify a reliable source of Tifton 85 sprigs located well before planting time.
- Disk the small grain or ryegrass under during last seedbed preparation (late March).
- Dig Tifton 85 sprigs ONLY after they have broken dormancy. (This is much different than typical planting of Coastal sprigs, which are many times dug during the dormant stage.)
- Plant 30-40 bushels of Tifton 85 sprigs into a (hopefully) moist seedbed, just prior to a gentle $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch precipitation event. Plant 2 to 2½ inches deep. Do not plant deeper than 3"!
- Roll the seedbed to ensure good sprig-soil contact.
- Use 1.5 to 3.0 pints/acre of Direx 4L or Diuron 4L pre-emergent herbicide within a day or two of planting. As an alternative, use 1 to 2 quarts/acre of Weedmaster within the same time period.
- When sprigs begin to green up, apply 40 to 60 lbs of actual N/acre and any potassium (K) according to soil test recommendation.
- Pay close attention to broadleaf weed competition and control with appropriate herbicides.
- Graze only lightly or only harvest for hay one time prior to mid September. Allow forage to go into the winter with 6 to 8 inches of stubble height.
- Do not overseed with winter annuals the first season.