



## HOW TO GROW IT

by Doug Brede, Ph.D.



What would you do with three extra free Saturdays a month that you didn't have to spend mowing the grass? My Holiday Lawn™ is the innovation that can make that happen. You can renovate and replace your existing lawn with a grass that requires mowing as little as once a month.

Now, I realize some folks actually enjoy mowing their



*With iris blooming in the background, it's June 12 and My Holiday Lawn is ready for its third mow of the season. During its first year of growth, My Holiday Lawn may require two June mowings to keep seedheads at bay. Seedheads will be few and inconspicuous in later years as the turf establishes.*

lawn. It's relaxing and smells nice. But for many of us in turf careers, we would rather do something besides tend grass on weekends. For us, My Holiday Lawn is the answer.

In this issue, I'm going to answer some of the questions posed to us at trade shows this winter regarding Holiday Lawn and how to grow it.

**Q:** What kind of grass is My Holiday Lawn?

**A:** My Holiday Lawn is a series of 3 very compatible Kentucky bluegrasses that can be used in combination or straight (one single variety). We recognize that bluegrass is not adaptable everywhere, but in North America alone over 100,000,000 people can grow a bluegrass lawn, and My Holiday Lawn can save them time and money.

**Q:** Can you mix My Holiday Lawn with other turfgrass species?

**A:** No, not if you want the infrequent mowing characteristics. Other grasses grow taller and faster and would defeat the desirable traits in My Holiday Lawn.

**Q:** It sounds too good to be true. What are some of its pitfalls?

**A:** You might miss the nice attractive striping pattern on your lawn. You will get striping from your monthly mow, but it will dissipate in a couple weeks, replaced by a soft appearance. Also, you can't forget about weed control. A fast-growing thistle or vine that is easily controlled by mowing may instead need help from herbicides. And thirdly, my biggest concern is copycats – companies who bring out a product virtually over night and say it has the same characteristics as XYZ. There are already some odd grass seed mixtures on the market claiming zero mowing. Consumer beware.

**Q:** Anything different when it comes to establishment and grow in?

**A:** No, these grasses can be treated like you would a normal Kentucky bluegrass. Seeding rate of 2 to 3 lbs. per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>. Starter fertilizer and mulch. Pretty standard.

**Q:** What about soil prep? Anything different?

**A:** Yes, it is important with this grass to work with a clean

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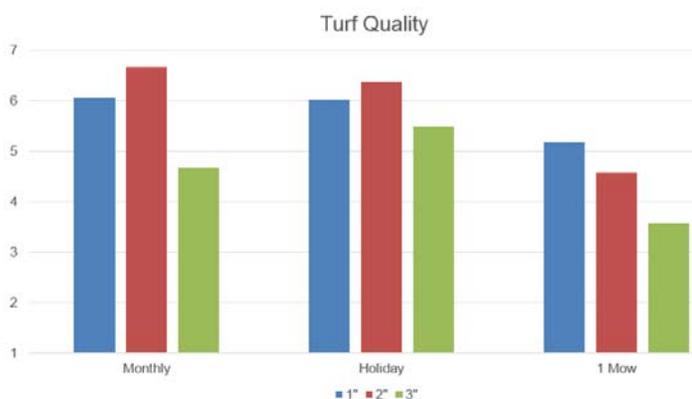
*The Wick-Wand is a handy homeowner tool for eradicating taller unwanted plants. It consists of a PVC tube filled with 1/3rd*



**A:** (continued) slate in terms of soil. You don't want pre-existing grasses. The overall mowing frequency of your new lawn will be dictated by its tallest growing component – weeds, foreign grasses, etc. Therefore the ideal situation would be to control the vegetation twice with glyphosate herbicide and get a good kill, and then cultivate and sod with My Holiday Lawn. The sodding will help smother out existing grasses and get you a pure stand. It is possible to control grassy weeds after the fact (see photo, page 1), but why go to that trouble if you don't have to?

**Q:** What is a good fertilizer and rate?

**A:** First year fertilization is fairly standard. The stand should be pushed with NPK to fill in. Then as soon as complete, back off to lower levels. We have done experiments to answer the question of maintenance fertilization. After the first year, slow release, coated fertilizer seems to be best for slow feeding. If you dump a lot of quickly available fertilizer on a Holiday Lawn, you will be mowing it next week. It performs best when fertilized with 1 to 3 lbs. of nitrogen per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> per year, split into 1 or more applications. If you get heavy-handed with the fertilizer and apply 6 lbs. N per year, you can plan on mowing twice as often.



**Results of a 2014 Holiday Lawn mowing height and frequency trial. Bargraphs on the left show monthly mowing. Center graphs show mowing on legal holidays (Memorial day, Fourth of July, Labor Day). Right graphs show one mowing for all summer. Averages were based on 4 quality ratings. Values of 5 or above are considered acceptable. Values of 7 or above are considered golf course quality.**

**Q:** Is My Holiday Lawn attractive enough to use on golf courses and sports fields?

**A:** Yes indeed. We have tested the Holiday Lawn varieties against chart-topping varieties from the NTEP and found similar or better performance. As a matter of fact, two of the varieties have exceptional resistance to mildew and rust disease.

**Q:** What happens to this grass if I mow it less often than once a month?

**A:** The main negative would be that it wouldn't keep that freshly mown look. It would start to get more of a rolling look to the top of the canopy and weed control would become an issue as it competed with taller



Scan here for My Holiday Lawn website

growing weeds. But compared to other options on the market, it would be an excellent choice for such a site.

**Q:** What about if I wanted to give it "normal" maintenance such as weekly mowing?

**A:** If you did, you would find it to be very similar to a conventional lawngrass, but one with much better turf quality.

**Q:** How is its spring greenup?

**A:** Compared to other bluegrasses, it is not the fastest to green up nor the slowest. It is intermediate.

**Q:** How about wear tolerance?

**A:** From what we have seen so far, My Holiday Lawn seems to be satisfactory for sports turf. More results will be shared as they come available.

**Q:** Is it more water thrifty than other grasses?

**A:** Research has shown that bluegrass is actually far more drought tolerant than people think. It would probably take a PhD thesis to answer this question of water use adequately. My guess is that it is perhaps 10 to 20% more water efficient due to the fact that it puts on less topgrowth than a conventional grass. But I'm just speculating.

**Q:** How does this grass do in terms of seed yield and seed pricing?

**A:** The Holiday Lawn varieties in general are more basal in their growth habit (less stemmy) and are somewhat shorter (though not dwarf). As a result they tend to have a less-than-normal seed yield compared to other bluegrasses. Seed pricing is determined by supply and demand. Right now supply of certified seed is good but running out fast due to popularity.

**The defining feature of My Holiday Lawn™ is that while being mowed infrequently, it still looks attractive.**



**The above three photos are of experimental varieties in the same trial managed and mowed exactly the same.**

**Top: Too many seedheads**

**Middle: Too much topgrowth**

**Bottom: Perfect – compact canopy with exceptional turf quality making it a My Holiday Lawn candidate!**

**Visit [www.MyHolidayLawn.com](http://www.MyHolidayLawn.com) or contact your Jacklin representative to place your order!**