

# Penn State **Extension**

# Pasture Forage Species

## Kentucky Bluegrass

### *Characteristics*

- ◆ Dark-green grass that forms a dense sod in fertile, well-drained soils
- ◆ Narrow, creased, V-shaped leaves and canoe-shaped leaf tips
- ◆ Seed head is a panicle inflorescence
- ◆ Grows 12 to 18 inches in height

### *Attributes*

- ◆ Excellent pasture grass
- ◆ Leaves are clustered close to the ground
- ◆ Tolerates frequent and close grazing
- ◆ Stores carbohydrates in roots and rhizomes
- ◆ Rhizomes form dense sod, tiller and fill in bare spots
- ◆ Dense sod can reduce weed establishment
- ◆ Good erosion control
- ◆ Winter hardy
- ◆ Very palatable

### *Limitations*

- ◆ Little shade tolerance
- ◆ Little growth in summer when temperatures exceed 75 degrees
- ◆ Will go dormant and turn brown during hot, dry summers and will resume growth in fall
- ◆ Slow to establish - seeds take 14 days to germinate
- ◆ Low yielding plants

### *Management*

- ◆ Maintain soil at a pH of 6 or 7
- ◆ Apply nutrients based on soil test reports
- ◆ Remove horses from pasture until all fertilizer has been incorporated into the soil

- ◆ Pairing with white clover when seeding provides soil nitrogen
- ◆ Seed conventionally into a firm well-prepared seed bed or use a no-till drill
- ◆ When seeding a pure stand - plant at 10 to 14 lbs. of seed per acre; heavier rates to ensure quicker ground cover
- ◆ Seeding with other higher yielding grasses will increase production
- ◆ Mow to maintain a plant height of 2 to 4 inches to promote tillering
- ◆ If pasture is overgrazed, white clover may dominate the pasture; to suppress the clover, allow the blue grass to grow to 8 to 12 inches in height and /or apply nitrogen fertilizer



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