

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



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Controlling Bentgrass Patches in the Lawn

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce plant problems. These include using resistant plant varieties, proper plant selection and placement, good aftercare and biological and/or mechanical controls. As a last resort, after all other remedies have been explored, a pesticide* that is least toxic to people and natural predators, can be considered. Prior to using any pesticides, plants should always be monitored for the degree of infestation and a sensible control measure considered.

* A pesticide is a substance that kills, or attempts to kill, a particular pest, e.g. *insecticide*, *fungicide*, *herbicide*, etc.

Did you ever mow your lawn and immediately after mowing an area, notice the grass is whitish in color? Chances are, the grass in that area is bentgrass. Bentgrass is not commonly used as a lawn grass due to its need to be closely mowed: 1/4 inch or less. Patches of bentgrass are commonly seen growing in a bluegrass or perennial ryegrass lawn. Apparently before people understood about correct mowing heights, bentgrass seed used to be incorporated in LI grass seed mixtures because of its tolerance to sea-side conditions.

Bent grass can be a troublesome invader in a mixed grass lawn. Since bentgrass has a lower meristematic point (the place from which all new growth occurs), it can tolerate, and indeed appreciates much closer mowing than other types of grasses. This creates a big problem when you are trying to keep the grass mowed at the correct height for virtually all other types of common lawn grass. The bent when left long, gets stemmy and scraggly and flops over leaving your mixed grass lawn looking like

someone who had their hair cut by a half blocked vacuum.

To complicate things even further, we do **not** presently have an herbicide (weed killer) which will control the bentgrass and not control the Kentucky bluegrasses or perennial ryegrasses. Therefore, we are left with limited options to remedy the situation.

The first step is to spot-treat each individual patch of bentgrass with a non-selective herbicide or one of the fatty acid type products. **Remember, don't spray the grass you want to keep. If it is sprayed, it will die also. Don't spray trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials or vegetables either - read the label.** The herbicide will take a week or two (depending on the time of year it is applied) to kill the grass. When you are removing bent, you may have to make a second application of non-selective herbicide, or you may want to excavate around the treated areas in order to reduce the seed bank. Fill in areas with seed or sod.

WHENEVER YOU USE A PESTICIDE,
ALWAYS READ THE LABEL AND FOLLOW
THE MANUFACTURER'S INSTRUCTIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0340. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied."

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