

Want a Non-Toxic Lawn? Start by Choosing the Right Grass Seed

Adopting a regenerative growing system for your lawn? Simply trying to use fewer pesticides and chemical fertilizers? Either way, your choice of grass seed is critical.

All too often, homeowners on a quest for fewer chemicals choose a grass seed that won't thrive in non-toxic growing environments – killing their chances of a lush, safer lawn before they start. If you're using (or preparing to use) fewer chemical inputs, you need a carefully-designed seed that's a cut above the rest in several key areas.

Here's what to look for:

Buy an A-LIST® Certified grass seed.

The A-LIST® is compiled by the Alliance for Low Input Sustainable Turf, a non-profit that puts commercially-grown seed varieties through testing trials: How does the seed perform in heat? In droughts? How well does it resist disease pressure? Grass seed blends with high percentages of high-performance seeds are Certified A-LIST®. Regenerative and non-toxic homeowners and lawn care operators are wise to choose a seed that's earned a spot on this coveted list.

Look for seed coating.

Turf grasses rarely use seed coating, but they're common in the agricultural world – for good reason: When you add seed coating, you get better germination, increased root elongation, faster establishment, and increased survivability. In one test, coated seeds showed 90% germination, compared to just 60% germination in a non-coated control set. Seven days after initial germination, root elongation in coated seeds was nearly an inch, whereas control group roots were only half as deep. Better, faster establishment is the key to growing success – and seed coating is a silver bullet.

Look for no weed seed.

Commercially available grass seeds have to disclose weed seed content on their packaging. Totals that might seem harmless, like .50%, can actually spell trouble. Here's why: Weed seed percentages on product packaging are percentages by weight – not by seed count. Since a weed seed is significantly smaller than a grass seed, a seemingly small percentage can indicate a high number of weeds seeds relative to grass seeds. And guess what germinates first when you plant? You guessed it: Weeds. A key to successful non-toxic growing is grass seed that contains no weed seed. Otherwise, you're losing the non-toxic battle before it starts.

Look for tall fescue.

Why do we love tall fescue? Let us count the ways: It's drought and heat tolerant. It develops massive root systems, increasing its resistance to grub damage. Whereas Kentucky bluegrass roots only go down six inches, tall fescue can grow as deep as three feet. It's always pushing out new roots, so grubs rarely kill the plant. Tall fescue contains endophytes which are naturally resistant to surface-feeding insects. Just be sure your blend includes more than one tall fescue variety so that if disease strikes, you're protected by diversification.

Of course, like all things, tall fescue has a weakness. Its Achilles' heel? It does not spread well laterally. So you need to...

Look for a seed that spreads.

Rhizomes are stems that grow horizontally. Plants with rhizomous activity will find their way across soil's surface area, filling in grass. Bluegrass is a grass seed variety loaded with rhizomes that are both aggressive and enduring (tall fescue rhizomes stop spreading after three years. Bluegrasses, on the other hand, keep going, continually filling in bare spots).



Purity	Variety/Kind	Germination	Origin
40.00%	Highlander Tall Fescue	90%	OR
24.00%	RhinoTurf Tall Fescue	90%	OR/WA
14.00%	Pavetta Tall Fescue	85%	OR
09.00%	Strata's Perennial Ryegrass	85%	WA
09.00%	SR284 Kentucky Bluegrass	85%	WA
00.00%	Other Crop Seed		
00.00%	Inert Matter		
00.00%	Other Weeds		
00.00%	Other Weeds		

Non-toxic Weed Seeds: None Found

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The Key to Great Results

Regenerative lawn care and non-toxic growing are gaining momentum as America realizes the risks of chemical pesticides. Choosing the right grass seed is the key to great results. Evolution grass seed by Branch Creek meets all of the marks above, and is the cornerstone of our regenerative growing.