

Kentucky Bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)



Image from UC Davis

Kentucky bluegrass is commonly used on athletic fields located in cooler regions of the United States. Kentucky bluegrass is well adapted as an athletic turf due to its dense growth, wear resistance, recuperative capacity, and aesthetic appearance. Kentucky bluegrass is often mixed with perennial ryegrass and tall fescue to enhance stress tolerance.



Image from AJ Turgeon

Identifying Characteristics:

Growth Habit: rhizomatous

Vernation: folded

Ligule: membranous, very short (0.2-1 mm)

Auricles: absent

Sheath: flattened, older sheaths split, compressed, smooth

Collar: broad, divided

Leaf tip: boat-shaped

Leaf Blades: adaxial: smooth with midrib, two distinct parallel lines one on each side of the midrib; abaxial: smooth, slightly keeled

Seedhead: open panicle, spikelets are flattened, with 3-5 seeds each



Image from AJ Turgeon

Additional Information:

Kentucky bluegrass is a cool-season perennial that is well adapted to athletic surfaces due to its wear resistance and recuperative capacity. Kentucky bluegrass grows by rhizomes which form a densely growing turf that provides good traction for athletes. Kentucky bluegrass is slow to establish, but provides an excellent playing surface once it is fully matured. Kentucky bluegrass is often combined with perennial ryegrass or turf type tall fescue to speed establishment and increase stress tolerance to environmental factors and weather conditions.