

Bahia grass

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AT-A-GLANCE: Bahia grass

Adaptation: South and Central GA. Best adapted on sandy soils. Tolerant of drought, poor drainage, acid soils, low fertility, and close grazing. Very aggressive and forms a dense sod.

Establishment: Plant scarified seed at 15 to 20 lb/A in March or April.

Varieties: Tifton 9, TifQuik, or UF-Riata. All of these are higher yielding than Pensacola and better suited for pasture and hay production. (More on bahia grass varieties [here](#).)

Bahia grass is a deep-rooted perennial adapted to a wide range of soils in the Coastal Plain region. It spreads by short, stout stolons and is a prolific seed producing plant. Bahia grass will grow on soils too poorly-drained for bermudagrass, is more shade tolerant than bermudagrass, and can be used in woodland pastures (silvopasture). Though it responds to proper fertility, it does not respond to high fertility as well as improved bermudagrasses and will persist in pastures with a low level of management.



Bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*)

Bahia grass forage is slightly lower in quality than Coastal bermudagrass. Close grazing is necessary to obtain good utilization. Bahia grass can become a pest in hybrid bermudagrass hay fields. Keep this in mind when rotating cattle, because seed will germinate after passing through cattle. Bahia grass introduced to a field (through seed in the droppings of cattle) can crowd out already-established bermudagrass. Information about varieties of bahia grass that are currently recommended may be found on the web page entitled “Forage Species and Varieties Recommended for Use in Georgia” (<http://www.caes.uga.edu/commodities/fieldcrops/forages/species.html>).

Establishment of Bahia grass

Bahia grass is best established on a well-prepared seedbed in early spring on upland soils or in late spring on low, moist soils. Bahia grass can be successfully seeded in early fall in extreme south Georgia. Broadcast or drill 12 – 15 lbs of seed per acre and cover seed ¼ - ½ inch deep. A cultipacker-seeder works well. Apply 40 – 50 lbs of N per acre after the seedlings start to grow. Allow the seedling plants to become well-established before grazing. If crabgrass becomes a problem, grazing or mowing may be necessary to prevent the crabgrass from shading the bahia grass seedlings.

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