Comparison Chart for cool and warm season grasses Douglas Spencer, for "Warm season grasses" talk, April 16, 2013

Variety	General Info	Advantage	Disadvantage	Traffic	Watering	Soil	Disease Insects	Mow Height
Cool Season Kentucky Bluegrass	A fine and tightly knit dark green grass, it is often mixed with other species for best results. It is popular throughout the northern and transition zones for its ability to grow in shady conditions.	Grows well in shade	Make sure your seed bag label doesn't list Annual Bluegrass, it is a weed.	Fair	Mow at a height of 2-3" and your bluegrass should be able to withstand slight drought.	Bluegrass grows well in loose soil, so if you have heavy clay, aeration is necessary every few years.	A common problem is leaf spot diseases, which is characterized by brown borders or tan centers to the leaf, and should be treated with fungicide	Mow at a height of 2-3" and your bluegrass should be able to withstand slight drought.
Cool Season Perennial Ryegrass	Found primarily in the northern and transition zones, it does need full sun to thrive. Perennial Ryegrass has a medium texture and grows in clumps or bunches but is often blended with fescues and bluegrass for a uniform look and feel.	Because of its fast growth it fills in nicely for warm season grasses during their dormant period.	Only grows during fall to Spring	Good	Needs less watering because it only grows during fall, winter, and spring wet season.	Grows well in loose soil, so if you have heavy clay, aeration is necessary every few years.		Set your mower height to 2-3" and don't be tempted to save money by getting Annual ryegrass, it is much rougher and much less attractive.
Cool Season Fine Fescue	It has three varieties; creeping red fescue, hard fescue and chewings fescue. Plant it in the spring so it grows in early and fast, then mow at a height of 2-3".	An excellent performer in shade and cold, this is often added to fill in where other cool season species fail	A heat wave of more than a week, could require more care and watering, as high temps stress this grass out	A good choice for high traffic areas	Mow at a height of 2-3" and your bluegrass should be able to withstand slight drought	Can handle most soil conditions and climates		Mow at a height of 2-3" and your bluegrass should be able to withstand slight drought.

Warm along the	st in Florida and entire gulf and						Insects	
Bahia The grass grows in b	Atlantic coastlines. is coarse and bunches and the be as deep as 8ft	Extremely heat and drought resistant Great for heavy traffic Highly disease and insect resistant	In fall it goes dormant turning all brown while it sleeps	Good option for heavy traffic	Rarely needs watering		It is highly disease and insect resistant	Bahia grass has tough stems so it is important to keep your mower blades sharp and set your mower to 3" so you are definitely cutting leaves not roots
Warm Season Sermuda Sermuda Season Sermuda	throughout the san aggressive, ass that grows by runners or along the ground for creeping and er neighboring beds, me to clear the plants is in the en dormant.	It thrives in heat, requiring full sun Bermuda is green from late spring	In fall it goes dormant turning all brown while it sleeps. During this period most homeowners choose to over seed with a ryegrass to maintain a green lawn year round.	Best option for heavy traffic	Drought resistant	Grows best in sandy or nitrogen poor soil		Bermuda must be mowed low at a height of 1-2 inches
Season sun but wi partial sha Centipede Centipede performs with need for feed	, and it thrives in full ill manage with	Centipede grass grows by spreading stolons or runners above ground, while the rhizomes or roots creep below the soil. Once established it is very low maintenance	Extremely slow growing Taking up to 3 years to completely fill in. This grass is fairly shallow rooted, which can lead to problems with nutrient uptake Nematodes, microscopic worms that infect the roots, are a common problem with centipede grasses and their presence can be confirmed	Good option for heavy traffic	Drought tolerant Water only if a drought lasts longer than one week	Grows well in acidic soil		Mow your centipede lawn high at about 3"

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Warm Season St. Augustine	Commonly found in the gulf states and Southern California. It grows fast and spreads using runners or stolons. A blue green color that lasts into the fall.	Best choice for sandy soil and salty air. Consider fertilizing with extra iron since sandy soils are often deficient	In fall it goes dormant turning all brown while it sleeps Two common problems with this grass are a virus called St. Augustine Decline (SAD) and chinch bugs. SAD causes yellow spots on the leaf blade and may require planting plugs of resistant varieties, but fertilizing with iron should help maintain the color even while fighting this virus.	Toughest grass for heavy traffic	Watered if drought is longer than a week			Set your mower blade to 2-3"
Warm Season Zoysia	Grown in both the Southern and Transition zone. Best method for establishing a Zoysia lawn is by sod, as it grows slowly.	Is known for its fine, lush vegetation Grows best in full sun	Feels a little prickly on bare feet. In fall it goes dormant turning all brown while it sleeps	Fairly good on foot traffic.	Watered if drought is longer than one week			Zoysia should be mowed short, at 1-2". A reel mower works best, cleanly cutting the fine yet stiff blade.