



There's a natural pest in garden -- is there a natural response?

Tom MacCubbin | IN THE GARDEN
June 22, 2008

The zeitgeist of zoysia

Q: I have seen lots of zoysia grass for sale. Do you think it is a good choice for the home lawn?

A: Zoysia is one of the tough, durable grasses for the home lawn that should include bahia and bermuda. Regrettably, many residents have higher expectations for these often-touted drought-tolerant turf types than they can produce. All can resist drought and usually survive until the next rain, but what most residents don't realize is they are also going to turn brown without water.

Of the three drought-tolerant types, zoysia might be the most pleasing. It's a thin-bladed vigorous grass that grows best in the full sun and is doing well in local landscapes. Many like the Northern-grass look of zoysia.

Zoysia is not a maintenance-free turf as some advertisements would lead you to believe. To produce the best growth and remain green, zoysia is going to need several feedings a year and water once or twice a week during the dry times. Zoysia does not get chinch bugs but it does have other pests, including the hunting billbug. It usually needs cutting once a week with a common rotary or reel-type mower during periods of rapid growth.

Tom MacCubbin is an urban horticulturist emeritus with the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Write to him at Orlando Sentinel, MP-240, P.O. Box 2833, Orlando, FL 32802. E-mail: TomMac1996@aol.com. Or blog with him at OrlandoSentinel.com/tomsdigs.