

Ask The Plant Groom(tm) by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom(tm)

For: QA1100

I live in Texas where the soil is pretty sandy. Will Zoysia grass grow very well here? If so, what variety would you recommend? As I understand it, Zoysia grass isn't as thirsty as St. Augustine. And Zoysia is much softer and grows greener with less maintenance.

What would be your choice of Zoysia, centipede, or St. Augustine grass in this area?
Thanks. - SW

Zoysia will grow well in Texas. As you have indicated in your query it is important to select varieties known to do well here.

Some Zoysia grass varieties released by Texas Cooperative Extension/Research are 'Crowne', 'Palisades' and 'Cavalier'. I suggest looking for these at local retailers and/or ask if they have sources for these varieties.

The time to plant in 2007 will be in May and June.

Correct. Zoysia is considered a less thirsty grass than St Augustine grass. Whether to plant it or any other grass for a home lawn is an individual choice. I grow Coastal Bermuda as our lawn grass. We like it's deep roots and low water requirement for our rural home.

It is very WaterWise and EARTH-KIND(tm). It might be fertilized one time annually and irrigated monthly around our landscaped areas. Throughout our remaining "yard" it receives no irrigation.

We are going to have to remove an older (I believe it to be an AZ Ash), from our front yard...small front yard. The tree, to be removed, sets between our walkway (to the front door) and our drive-way (to carport).

We want to replace this tree as soon as possible; but our space is limited. From where the old tree (that'll be removed) is currently standing to the asphalt (drive-way) is about six/eight feet.

Can we replace another tree in that area? (hedge in front, would like to plant tree right next to old stump, next to asphalt???)

Will the root system from the old tree interfere with our new tree?

And when is the earliest that we can plant the new tree?

Would probably like to replace this old tree with a Red Oak or something in that family; any suggestions for a fast growing, but long lasting tree?

Thank You. - B. M.

A Chinese pistachio(*Pistacia chinensis*) would be high on my list for this location. They often average 25-40' tall and 20-35-wide. We currently have two in our landscape and think they are great. Fall color is superb. If, you are set on a red oak then plant Shumard red oak or Texas red oak.

Container grow selections may be planted anytime of the year. After your existing tree is removed I suggest having the stump ground out. There are landscape contractor that perform this stump grinding service. Look under Landscape Contractors in your yellow pages and compare fees before selecting one.

Your new selection may be planted adjacent to your former tree's location. There shouldn't be any problems with the removed tree's old root system as far as the new tree's growth is concerned.

Here's a great source for additional tree information possibilities, visit <http://dallas-tx.tamu.edu> then click on; the Horticulture page, Plants for Dallas County and then Deciduous Trees. This site provides heights, widths, native or adapted, fall colors, flowers, fruit/seed, trunk colors and textures, exposure, soil types, moisture requirements, hardiness, Texas Superstars, WaterWise recognition and varieties. The information provided may be applied state wide.

How should I go about keeping weeds/grass killed while waiting to plant?

What are the best plants / groundcover to select to prevent having to continuously pull weeds/grass out of bed? I have put in metal edging. It is a sunny location and I hope to have a fairly low maintenance situation moving forward.

When is the best time to start planting?

PS., Soil is the Texas black gumbo variety. I have incorporated some mulch in my tilling.

Appreciate your radio programs and columns. -T. H.

When starting a new landscape bed in Texas I suggest approximately 2" each of - compost, Canadian sphagnum peat moss and shredded bark mulch tilled into the top 6 - 8" of native soil. This usually produces a raised bed of 12" or more. You should then be ready to plant almost any type of plant.

There are several brands available state wide of weed blocking materials that may be installed over amended landscape beds to deter weeds prior to planting your selections.

Now is a good time to install any well adapted landscape plantings desired. Some of my favorites include the holly, nandina and crape myrtle families.

Prior to installing plants it is wise and prudent to have a soil test done. Along with your request, send a long/legal sized self addressed envelope with two 1st class stamps on it to - Soil Test Forms, 10056 Marsh Lane, Suite B-101, Dallas, TX 75229.

Thanks for your compliment, I appreciate it.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist and Master Gardener Program Coordinator-Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A& M University System, Native Texan, Columnist, Author, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide as The Plant Groom(tm). Send your horticultural related questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net. To receive free live help with horticultural issues M - F, 8:30am - 4pm call the Master Gardeners at 214-904-3053.

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