

## Virginia Sod Directory

Information on sod producers, sod selection, and installations.

*J.M. Goatley Jr.\**

### Why Sod?

Sodding provides many advantages over seeding:

1. Creates an instant green lawn or recreational surface.
2. Gives immediate erosion control.
3. Eliminates dust and mud.
4. Eliminates weed control during establishment.
5. Can be used quickly.
6. Can be established year round.
7. Can get the best turfgrass varieties from producers.
8. Can be used for total installation or repair of smaller areas.

### What type of sod do you need?

The basic types of sod being grown in Virginia are Kentucky bluegrass blends, tall fescue or tall fescue-Kentucky bluegrass mixtures, Bermudagrass, and zoysiagrass. Each type is best suited to particular uses and geographic areas in Virginia.

Some sod is grown in the Virginia Crop Improvement Association (VCIA) sod certification program. This sod must meet established standards of quality, which also qualifies the sod to be marketed under the Virginia Department of Agriculture "Virginia's Finest" program.

VCIA certified sod or "Virginia's Finest" is sod of high quality, meeting rigid standards requiring preplanting field inspections, prescribed varieties and mixtures, periodic production inspections, and a final preharvest inspection. This program serves as a marketing tool and provides the consumer with guaranteed standards of quality. Consumers purchasing VCIA certified sod will receive a VCIA certified sod label with each load of sod.

While high-quality sod is available outside of the VCIA certified sod program, the consumer is encouraged to be aware of factors that are important in determining sod quality. Quality sod contains excellent turf varieties with good sod strength and has no serious insect, weed, or disease problems.

### Kentucky Bluegrass Blends (KBB)

Kentucky bluegrass blends contain two or more varieties of Kentucky bluegrass. They are best suited for the north central Piedmont region and areas along and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, requiring moderate to full sunlight, periodic fertilization and irrigation, and good soil drainage in order to provide quality turf. Kentucky bluegrass blends can provide high levels of turf quality on lawns, athletic fields, recreational areas, and in situations where erosion control is necessary and moderate maintenance is possible.

### Tall Fescue or Tall Fescue-Kentucky Bluegrass Mixtures (TF)

These mixtures generally contain from 90 percent to 100 percent improved "turf-type" tall fescues and 0 percent to 10 percent Kentucky bluegrass. Tall fescue is a broader-bladed grass than Kentucky bluegrass and therefore this sod has a slightly coarser texture than Kentucky bluegrass sod. Tall fescue sod is moderately drought and shade tolerant and performs well throughout Virginia. It is adapted to a wide range of soil conditions and management programs. It is not well suited to heavily trafficked areas but performs well on lawns, moderately trafficked recreational areas, and in situations where low maintenance erosion control is necessary. Since Kentucky bluegrass withstands traffic better than tall Fescue, it is sometimes mixed with tall fescue to enhance recovery from traffic injury.

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## Bermudagrass (BE)

Bermudagrass is a warm-season grass that turns straw-colored at the first frost and is dormant in the winter in Virginia. It is best adapted for areas in the south central Piedmont and coastal plain regions. It is very drought and traffic tolerant, requires full sunlight, and grows most actively in the summer months. It functions well on lawns, golf courses, athletic fields, and other areas where excessive winter traffic is not anticipated. It can be vegetatively established from sod, sprigs, or plugs.

## Zoysiagrass (Z)

Zoysiagrass is a warm-season grass that turns straw-colored at the first frost and is dormant in the winter in Virginia. It is best adapted for areas in the south central Piedmont and coastal plain regions. It is drought tolerant and slightly more shade tolerant than Bermudagrass. It functions well on lawns and moderately trafficked recreational areas where excessive winter traffic is not anticipated. It can be established from sod, sprigs, or plugs. Sprigs and plugs generally require two or three growing seasons to provide complete cover.

## Centipedegrass (C)

Centipedegrass is a warm season grass that is straw-colored at the first frost and is dormant in the winter in Virginia. It is best adapted in the eastern and coastal plain regions around Virginia Beach. It is slow growing and coarse-leafed. Growing well in full sun to moderate shade, it does not tolerate traffic or drought. It nevertheless requires little fertilizer and infrequent mowing. It is best established through sprigs or sod.

## Before Contacting Growers

If time permits, submit a soil test to your county Extension office one month prior to preparing the soil so you can follow the lime and fertilizer recommendations prior to sod installation.

Measure area to be sodded in square yards or square feet.

1 square yard = 9 square feet

111.1 sq. yds. = 1,000 sq. ft.

1 acre = 43,560 sq. ft.

1 acre = 4,840 sq. yds.

Determine whether you have the proper vehicle to transport the amount of sod you need and how many trips you will need to make.

The safe carrying capacity of vehicles varies:

Vehicle	Sq. Yds.
medium sized car	5 to 10
half-ton pickup	25 to 50
one-ton truck	150 to 200
two-ton truck	300 to 350
tandem (10-wheel)	500 to 600
tractor trailer (18-wheel)	1,000 to 1,100

If the soil is wet, less sod can be carried. Dry sod weighs about 20 to 25 lbs. per square yard whereas wet sod can weigh 30 to 40 lbs. per square yard. A pallet of sod will contain 50 to 75 square yards (450 to 675 sq. ft.) of sod.

## When Contacting Growers

Know how many square yards or square feet of the particular type of sod you want to purchase.

Remember that some sod comes with netting to aid in harvest. Netted sod may not be desirable if you anticipate cleated traffic on the sodded area (e.g. athletic fields).

Determine what services each grower you contact can provide and the cost of those services (e.g. pallet charges).

Sod-farm services vary and can include any of the following:

- cut your own sod, generally sold by the acre.
- pick up sod on pallet at farm.
- delivery to site.
- site grading, fertilization, installation.
- post-installation lawn service programs.

Once you select a grower, call as far ahead of installation time as possible to insure the sod will be available when you need it.

## Site Preparation

There are no shortcuts to soil preparation when sodding. Typically, site preparation for sod is identical to seeding to insure transplanting success. Remove existing grass or cultivate it down to a four-inch depth. Allow time for the soil to settle and then establish the final grade.

To greatly improve the chances for long-term success, incorporate fertilizer and lime according to the soil test. If no soil test is available, incorporate 20 lbs. of 5-10-5 or 10 lbs. of 10-20-10 and 50 to 100 lbs. of agricultural ground limestone per 1,000 square feet to a depth of four to six inches.

Rake the area until smooth and even removing debris and stones.

## When Sod is Ready for Pickup or Delivery

Prepare the site for installation prior to pick-up or delivery. If the soil at the installation site is extremely dry, lightly water it 12 hours prior to installation. Sod is perishable and should be installed within eight hours of harvest!

Wear work clothes. If you are buying sod by the roll and are concerned about keeping your vehicle clean, bring something on which to lay the sod.

Do not overload your vehicle.

On hot days when sod will be transported for an hour or more, use light, vented covers to reduce drying and heat buildup.

If buying VCIA Certified Sod, request the certification labels with each load you purchase.

## When Installing Your Sod

Lightly rake the area to be sodded just prior to installation. Sod survival is greatest when installed on relatively moist soil that is cool. **Do not** install sod on grass, debris, or rocks.

Lay the first line of sod along a straight line such as a driveway, sidewalk, or string stretched between two stakes. Then stagger the sod pieces in the adjacent rows in “brickwork” fashion. Since sod pieces may shrink after installation, push the sod pieces together tightly.

Try to minimize soil compaction in the installation area by using wheelbarrows to move the sod. Plywood boards laid in heavy tracking areas will minimize compaction.

Roll the sod with a heavy hand roller after you lay it to press roots to the soil.

**Saturate the sod** with water immediately after installation, wetting the soil under the sod to a four-inch depth. Examine the soil under several pieces of sod to insure proper wetting.

## When Maintaining Your Sod

Begin mowing the sod with a sharp mower as soon as it is rooted. Mow frequently enough so that you never remove more than one-third of the existing green tissue.

Mow Kentucky bluegrass and tall Fescue sods at two to two and one-half inches and Bermudagrass and Zoysia at one-half to one inch.

From October through April, apply water every second or third day for three weeks, even if it rains. The rule is to make sure the soil is wet to a three- to four-inch depth. **In hot weather (above 80° F) water the sod daily, wetting the soil thoroughly until the sod is well rooted.**

After the sod is well rooted, irrigate to prevent drought damage.

Extension publication 430-011, *Lawn Fertilization in Virginia*, provides information about fertilizing your newly established sod. This publication, as well as others, can be accessed via Virginia Tech’s “Turf Science” Web page at <http://sudan.cses.vt.edu/html/Turf/turf/index.html>.

## About This Directory

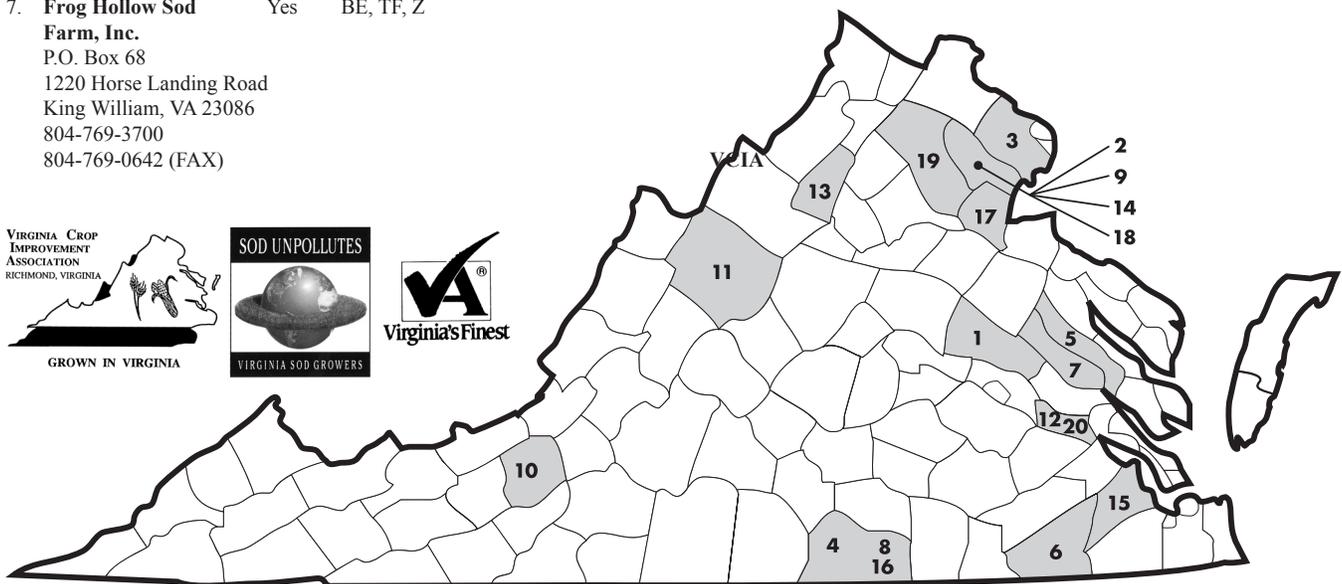
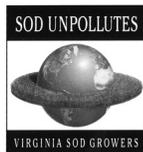
Although the information presented in this directory was believed to be current at publication time, variety availability, as well as the services offered by producers could change.

Retail nursery operations not specializing in either sod production or sod sales were intentionally excluded from this directory. These businesses typically buy their sod for resale from the producers listed in this directory, and they may not stock sod throughout the year. In addition to locating sod sources in this directory, home consumers may wish to contact their local retail nursery center to determine turfgrass sod varieties available locally.

Information presented in this directory was gathered during 2004 in a phone and mail survey of producers in Virginia. Every effort was made to contact all known producers in the state of Virginia. Sod producers or other business entities specializing in the production or sale of turfgrass sod who are not listed in this directory and who wish to be included in the next update of this directory should direct their request to: Mike Goatley, Extension Agronomist, Turf, Department of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech (0403), Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Map Location Number and Farm Information	VCIA Certified Sod Participant	Types of Sod*	Map Location Number and Farm Information	VCIA Certified Sod Participant	Types of Sod*	Map Location Number and Farm Information	Certified Sod Participant	Types of Sod*
1. <b>Brookmeade Sod Farm, Inc.</b> Louis L. Brooking, Jr. 14328 Medley Grove Lane Doswell, VA 23407 Louturf@aol.com 804-883-6338 804-883-6377	No	KBB, TF, Z	8. <b>Kidwell Organics, Inc.</b> P.O. Box 48 9360 Buggs Island Road Baskerville, VA 23915 duraturf@buggs.net 434-689-3115 434-689-3116 (FAX)	Yes	BE, Z	15. <b>Southern Belle Turf Farms</b> 14141 Tucker Swamp Road Zuni, VA 23898 757-242-3383 or 757-242-6793 757-242-6557 (FAX)	Yes	BE, SA, TF
2. <b>Centreville Sod, Inc.</b> P. O. Box 733 Bristow, VA 20136 Centrevillesod@aol.com 703-361-8338 703-361-8338 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF, BT	9. <b>Kettle Wind Farm</b> 11261 Morla Lane Nokesville, VA 20181 Paulkwf@aol.com 703-594-2709 703-594-3041 (FAX)	No	KBB, TF	16. <b>Southern Turf Nurseries of Virginia</b> 819 Baskerville Road Baskerville, VA 23915 804-689-2831 or 800-338-8283 804-689-2606 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF, BE, Z, C
3. <b>Chantilly Turf Farms, Inc.</b> 25077 Evergreen Mills Road Sterling, VA 20166 chantillyturf@earthlink.net 703-996-0029 703-996-0129 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF	10. <b>Lavery's Sod Farm</b> P.O. Box 387 Shawsville, VA 24162 540-268-1220 540-268-1320 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF, Z	17. <b>S. Burton &amp; Co., Inc.</b> P.O. Box 147 Hartwood, VA 22471 540-752-2681 540-752-7231 (FAX)	No	KBB
4. <b>Daniel Sod Farm</b> 2030 Davmunds Trail Sutherlin, VA 24594 434-753-1165 434-753-1781 (FAX) 434-548-6303 (Cell)	Yes	TF	11. <b>Mast Systems, Inc.</b> 917 Cottontail Trail Mt. Crawford, VA 22841 mastirrigation@mastgroup.net 540-434-5755 540-433-9273 (FAX)	No	KBB	18. <b>Virginia Beef Corporation</b> 1215 James Madison Highway Haymarket, VA 20169 703-754-8873 703-754-0234 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF
5. <b>Enfield Sod, Inc.</b> P. O. Box 177 1910 Walkerton Road Walkerton, VA 23177 sod@Enfield-Sod.com info@Enfield-Sod.com 804-769-4545 804-769-1539 (FAX)	No	TF	12. <b>Meadowspring Turf</b> 17820 The Glebe Lane Charles City, VA 23030 MTURF1@AOL.COM 804-829-2696 804-829-6140 (FAX)	Yes	BE, TF, Z	19. <b>Woodward Turf Farms, Inc.</b> P.O. Box 609 Remington, VA 22734 clwturf@aol.com, 540-727-0020 540-727-0304 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF, BE
6. <b>Franklin Turfgrass, Inc.</b> 408 River Road Franklin, VA 23851 757-569-8873 757-569-1673 (FAX)	Yes	BE, TF	13. <b>Noah Turner &amp; Sons</b> 723 Brady Road Stanley, VA 22851 540-778-2692 540-843-0391 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF	20. <b>Riverside Farm</b> 18201 Sandy Pt. Road Charles City, VA 23030 804-829-5737 804-829-6764 (FAX)	No	TF
7. <b>Frog Hollow Sod Farm, Inc.</b> P.O. Box 68 1220 Horse Landing Road King William, VA 23086 804-769-3700 804-769-0642 (FAX)	Yes	BE, TF, Z	14. <b>Nova Turf Farm</b> 12005 Hazelwood Drive Nokesville, VA 20181 703-594-3406 703-594-3412 (FAX)	Yes	KBB, TF			

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\*BE = Bermudagrass, BT = Bentgrass, C = Centipedegrass, KBB = Kentucky Bluegrass Blend, SA = Saint Augustine, TF = Tall Fescue or Tall Fescue + Kentucky Bluegrass, Z = Zoysiagrass

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products, trade names, or individual growers is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Virginia Tech or Virginia Cooperative Extension is implied.