SOD 101

{How to Choose and Install the Best Lawn for Your Home.}

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Ground Source Landscaping
www.groundsource.pro
407-378-5366
About Joe Mouad

Joe Mouad, the owner of Ground Source LLC, began with property maintenance in high school and that carried on into college, where he decided to focus primarily on business as that was where his heart was.

In 2004 shortly after the hurricanes rolled through, where many of you will remember three hurricanes back to back, the new installation business really picked up. Sod and landscape installation demands were huge, so they put a lot of focus on the install side of the business as well.

Below are a few before and after pictures from a couple recent jobs:
I hope you enjoy reading this guide, and if you’d like to see how I can help you, call me at **407-378-5366** today.

We look forward to helping you enjoy your new yard!

Joe Mouad

Founder and Owner

*Ground Source, LLC*

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Why This Guide Can Save You Money and Provide You With Years of Enjoyment ...

There’s no question that sod is one of the most important parts in providing curb appeal for your home or business. A great landscape design and layout with a great paint job means nothing if the lawn is brown.

A business with brown grass, especially a restaurant, is usually not very busy. A little money spent now will increase your property value of your home or may boost revenue whether you are an apartment complex trying to fill your vacancies or a restaurant trying to fill empty chairs.

But for the novice, choosing and installing the right type of sod is often overlooked. Choosing the right type of sod can leave you years of enjoyment when cared for properly.

**Important questions you should be able to answer prior to choosing a grass variety:**

1. Do you have an irrigation system or are you able to water a couple of times weekly?

2. Do you plan on or do you have in your budget to hire a fertilization and pest control company?

3. Do you travel a lot?

4. Do you care if the lawn has weeds as long as it is green, or do you want that perfectly manicured lawn that’s always 99% weed free and green?

5. Do you receive excessive shade or is the area in direct sunlight?

6. What is the soil ph level, if applicable?

7. Do you have a home owner’s association, if so what types of sod do they allow?

8. How will your sod be used, will there be a lot of foot and animal traffic, is it for a daycare, or is it just for aesthetic purposes as well as the occasional family outing?
Central Florida Sod Varieties:

St. Augustine Grasses:

St. Augustine is a medium to high maintenance tropical grass with broad, dark green blades. It’s a popular variety for Florida because it thrives in moist, tropical areas.

The following are the most common varieties of St. Augustine:

Floratam

Like other St. Augustine varieties, Floratam is a thick deep rooted lawn that needs direct sunlight, a minimum of six hours or more per day. Floratam needs to be watered a minimum of twice per week in the hot growing season at ¾”- 1” of water per application.

Floratam is best maintained with a standard rotary mower cutting no more than 1/3” off per cut, requiring mowing approximately 42- 46 times per calendar year. Regular pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers are required to keep this type of sod up to par.

With this variety you have to watch closely for sod webworms, chinch bugs, and fungus. Keeping your fertilization and irrigation up to par will give you many years of enjoyable turf for your home or business. St. Augustine Floratam is still the most common type of sod today for homes and businesses in the Central Florida area.

Bitter Blue

This St. Augustine variety earned its name due to its bluish- green coloration of the blades. Bitter Blue has a slightly narrower blade than the Floratam as well, and if installed next to Floratam you can see the difference in the shades of color.

When installed alone, many people will mistake the Bitter Blue for the more common Floratam. Bitter Blue is considered a shade grass, needing four hours of sunlight or more per day. Bitter Blue will grow in direct sunlight as well.
Seville

Seville St. Augustine has a narrower blade than either of the varieties discussed previously. Seville is dark green in color and can be cut as low as 3” and as high as 3.5” to achieve maximum health. Seville requires the same maintenance as the other St. Augustine grasses, though grows slower than the other two, partially because it is planted beneath trees so often.

Fungus can be a major concern if you receive more than normal amounts of water and the areas are very shady where it is planted. Seville is one of the more shade tolerant grasses, accepting only two hours of sunlight per day.

We strongly recommend installing any shade grass during the fall, winter, or spring, avoiding any chance of installing in the middle of summer and having uncontrollable rainfall. Root rot, caused from too much rain soaking newly planted sod beneath too many trees which does not allow the sod to dry out for days at a time, is the only thing we will not cover under warranty as it is considered “circumstances beyond our control”. We always try to steer customers away from summer sod installations beneath heavily shaded areas, guiding them to waiting until the fall as we want all our customers to be happy with their newly planted grass.

Palmetto

Palmetto is an excellent low-maintenance grass. Like Seville St. Augustine, it features a strong, dark- green color and is suitable in the shade, thriving in as little as two hours per day of sunlight. Unlike the Seville, the Palmetto will do better in the direct sunlight for years to come, as Seville tends to build up thatch when planted in direct sunlight after four or five years, as it grows outwards.

Captiva

Want a low maintenance grass which is chinch bug resistant? Then look no further than Captiva. This grass variety grows deep, strong roots, and a dense short canopy like the Seville and Palmetto, which means less cutting. Captiva has not been available to us more than a couple of years now, so it is unclear as to whether or not the Florida chinch bug will eventually make its way to this cultivar, though for now it is safe.

Floratam was chinch bug resilient when it first came out as well. The Captiva is a shade tolerant option as well, requiring two hours of sunlight or more per day to thrive.
Argentine Bahia

Bahia varieties are known for their ability to grow in infertile soils and live with little water. Bahia is a low maintenance variety used primarily for erosion control, municipalities, and right of ways. Once established, Bahia can live off rain water alone, and there is no need to keep a fertilization or pest control company as most owners can apply the two applications of weed and feed that Bahia needs per year.

If you want a lawn that looks green and full from the street this lawn is for you. If you don’t want to see any weeds or bare spots, we would recommend staying away from this type of sod, as there are weeds within it the day it is installed. Note: do not mow Bahia at low levels, as this reduces its natural tolerance to drought, heat and insects.

Celebration Bermuda

Celebration is a darker green and more beautiful grass than the 419. It’s a tough, naturally drought resistant grass. Celebration is an excellent choice for high traffic areas where you want the durability of Bahia but don’t want all the problems with weeds and bare spots.

Celebration will do best when maintained with a reel mower, making the maintenance somewhat demanding. Mowing height should be no more than 1.5”, which will mean that in the heavy growing season you may have to mow more than once per week.

419

Another Bermuda variety is Tifway 419. This grass is excellent for high traffic areas (especially sports turf and golf courses) due to its strength and excellent wear tolerance. 419 is best maintained 1”-1.5”, making it necessary to mow two to three times per week sometimes.
Sod Comparison Chart

Now that we’ve covered each major Florida sod variety, let’s take a look at which is right for you. The following chart should make this easy for you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Grass</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Shade Tolerance</th>
<th>Drought Tolerance</th>
<th>Chinch Bug Resistant</th>
<th>Reduced Mowing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floratam</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seville</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitter Blue</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmetto</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captiva</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>Empire</td>
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<td>Average</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argentine</td>
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<td>Poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Average</td>
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<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebration</td>
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<tr>
<td>419</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, each sod variety has its own strengths and weaknesses. Remember, there’s no “perfect” grass for everyone... some people may love the look of Bitter Blue but don’t want to mow it that frequently.

Of course, if you have any concerns about choosing the right sod I’m happy to help you out!

Now that we’ve covered sod varieties, it’s time to discuss the installation process.
What to Expect: The Sod Installation Process

When you call us we will come out and give you a free, no obligation quote. Upon acceptance of our proposal, we will do an application of Round-up to kill off all weeds and existing grass. The Round-up process can take from one to three applications, depending on what type of weeds you currently have, which means your wait time for new sod can be anywhere from one to three weeks.

Once the yard is dead we will flag all irrigation heads, strip the area using our sod cutters and haul away all the sod as well as grade out any imperfections in your lawn. The sod will then be delivered and installed and we will check and adjust all irrigation heads as well as set the timer accordingly.

Why Pay Upfront for Landscaping?

Why risk paying a landscaper upfront... then wind up with dead grass and broken sprinklers? Why bother worrying about getting ripped off... and find yourself starting over again, in search of another landscaper? Why indeed? At Ground Source, you don’t pay a cent until after the job is complete and you’re happy with the results. Don’t like it for any reason? We’ll make it right... guaranteed.

Three Reasons To Work With Ground Source

1. **Fully Insured:** Our employees are covered by worker’s compensation and general liability. Should anything happen... you won’t be liable for anything.

2. **No Money Down:** You only pay after the job is complete and you’re happy with the results

3. **Personal:** Someone will personally come out and measure your yard. After reviewing your home, we will hand you an in-depth, professional quote which outlines exactly what we’ll do for you. Any questions? Just let us know!

Look forward to hearing from you.

Joe Moul

407-378-5366
**FAQ**

**What are the benefits of Bahia over St. Augustine?**

Bahia tends to have less insect problems and is much more drought resistant.

**What is the most drought resistant grass?**

Bahia is the most drought resistant grass, and is a perfect low maintenance variety for Florida.

**What shade grass is best?**

All of the St. Augustine grasses are shade tolerant, except Floratam, which requires 6 hours of direct sun per day.

Bermuda grass requires mowing three times a week to keep it looking like a golf course.

**How do I pay?**

You can pay by either check and/or credit card.

**When can you begin?**

I can get Round Up down within a day. Depending on how many applications needed – 1 – 3 – your sod will be fully installed with 7 – 20 days.