

Different lawn grasses require different levels of maintenance. Florida homeowners should realistically assess how much time, money, and work they can put into maintaining their lawns before they establish them. During times of drought or water shortages, selecting the right turf grass for a site becomes even more critical.

"Drought tolerance" refers to how well a turf grass can survive extended dry periods. Drought tolerance is a quality people should look for when establishing a lawn during a multi-year drought.

The three most-used grasses for home lawns in Florida are St. Augustine grass, Bahia grass, and centipede grass. St. Augustine grass, the most popular lawn grass in Florida because it produces a thick, dark green lawn, thrives in hot climates and stands up well to foot traffic. However, it does not perform well during extended dry periods. Bahia grass and centipede grass, however, both have good drought tolerance, but centipede grass is adapted to northern Florida only. These low-maintenance lawn grasses require less water and fertilizer than other species and thus less mowing and pest control. A low-maintenance lawn will generally look better during extended dry spells because it relies on less water.

Deep-rooted Bahia grass and centipede grass grow best in acidic, sandy soils that do not retain water. These grasses survive dry spells better than many other grass varieties and resist other kinds of stresses, such as traffic. The deep roots of these grasses make them good choices for establishing a lawn during an extended drought.

In most parts of Florida, home gardeners should irrigate by applying  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches of water at any given time. In very sandy soil, homeowners may need to apply the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch rate. In northern Florida and the Panhandle, where soils are heavier and have more clay, they may only need to use the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rate. In southeast Florida and the Keys, where the soil is shallow, home gardeners may need to irrigate only  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to saturate a lawn.

More lawns are damaged by over-watering than by any other cultural practice, so watering restrictions may not actually be as devastating as they seem. Home gardeners should water only when a lawn shows one of the three signs of wilt (lengthwise-folded blades, blue-gray color, or footprints remaining in grass).

Passage adapted from *Select a Florida Friendly Turfgrass* from the University of Florida/IFAS website: [ufl.edu](http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/water/articles/turf/selection.shtml) (April 16, 2009 – Copyright 2011).  
<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/water/articles/turf/selection.shtml>

1. Which of the following titles would be best for this passage?
  - A. Grasses Thrive in Florida's Climate
  - B. Water Critical to Maintaining Healthy Lawns
  - C. Landscaping Advice for Florida Homeowners
  - D. Factors Affecting Florida Lawn Health

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2. St. Augustine is the most popular lawn grass in Florida because \_\_\_\_\_
- A. it is extremely drought-tolerant.
  - B. it is impervious to hot temperatures.
  - C. it is less expensive than other varieties.
  - D. it requires less maintenance than Bahia grass.
3. Northern Florida homeowners who are concerned about pest-resistant yards \_\_\_\_\_
- A. should water the lawn only during dry spells.
  - B. should select either St. Augustine or Bahia grasses.
  - C. should select a shallow-rooted variety of grass.
  - D. should consider Bahia or centipede grasses.
4. The word “wilt” in the last paragraph means to \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. expire
  - B. shrivel
  - C. escalate
  - D. develop
5. It can be concluded from the passage that \_\_\_\_\_
- A. most Florida homeowners over-water their lawns.
  - B. acidic, sandy soils provide the best foundation for most varieties of grasses.
  - C. drought is the major cause of stress for all Florida lawns.
  - D. lawns in southern Florida require less water than lawns in northern Florida.
6. The passage implies that \_\_\_\_\_
- A. centipede grass requires constant watering.
  - B. Florida grass varieties are naturally drought-tolerant.
  - C. Florida lawns are susceptible to pests.
  - D. South Florida receives less rain than North Florida.
7. The main topic of this passage is \_\_\_\_\_
- A. soil varieties.
  - B. landscaping alternatives.
  - C. drought.
  - D. grass varieties.

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8. It can be inferred from this passage that \_\_\_\_\_
- A. droughts are common throughout Florida.
  - B. all Florida lawns need daily watering.
  - C. Florida lawns are subjected to a variety of stress factors.
  - D. Florida soil is not conducive to healthy lawns.
9. All of the following are mentioned except \_\_\_\_\_
- A. drought tolerance.
  - B. overwatering.
  - C. stress factors.
  - D. economic considerations.
10. According to the passage, lawns in the Florida Keys \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. contain a higher clay content than lawns in the Panhandle.
  - B. require more water than lawns in northern Florida.
  - C. have shallower soil conditions than lawns in northern Florida.
  - D. should be seeded with centipede grass.
11. All of the following are mentioned in the passage. Which are compared?
- A. Bahia grass and St. Augustine grass.
  - B. Southeast Florida and the Keys.
  - C. Florida lawns and gardens.
  - D. Over-watering and over-fertilizing.
12. Most likely, the author's purpose in writing this passage was to \_\_\_\_\_
- A. encourage homeowners to use St. Augustine grass.
  - B. inform Florida homeowners about lawn maintenance.
  - C. educate homeowners about Florida's variant soil varieties.
  - D. warn homeowners about the effects of drought.

**NLN/LPN Reading Passage 5 Answers**

1. D
2. B
3. D
4. B
5. D
6. C
7. D
8. C
9. D
10. C
11. A
12. B

**Note:** For questions or explanations, please visit one of the Indian River State College's Academic Support Centers to review answers with an English/reading instructor.