

'Captiva' St. Augustinegrass¹

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'Captiva' is a new cultivar of St. Augustinegrass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum* Walt. Kuntze) available for use in landscapes. The cultivar was developed at the University of Florida and was released for sod production in the summer of 2007. 'Captiva' is a "dwarf" St. Augustinegrass, characterized by dark green, short, narrow leaf blades and reduced vertical leaf extension. It also exhibits improved tolerance to two common insect pests of St. Augustinegrass, the southern chinch bug (*Blissus insularis*) and the plant hopper (*Liburnia pseudoseminigra*).

'Captiva' has been shown to be somewhat slower growing than many other cultivars of St. Augustinegrass. For example, 'Captiva' plugs planted at the same time as 'Floritam' and 'Seville' had less ground cover at 8 and 12 weeks after planting, but coverage was equal to Floritam by 16 weeks after planting. This would not affect the ability of the grass to establish if planted from sod, but the slower, shorter growth of this cultivar may mean slightly less frequent mowings.

Research conducted prior to release of 'Captiva' indicates that there is a higher mortality rate for southern chinch bugs with 'Captiva' (91.3%) compared to Floritam (47.2%). Similarly, plant hoppers survived for an average of 3.2 days on



Figure 1. 'Captiva' in a park-like setting on the University of Florida campus in Gainesville. Credit: Kevin Kenworthy, July 2009

'Captiva', compared to 18.2 days survival on 'Classic' St. Augustinegrass, which had the highest susceptibility of the cultivars tested.

Although no research data have been collected on shade tolerance of 'Captiva', it appears to be one of the more shade tolerant cultivars in anecdotal observations, similar to the other dwarf cultivars. It requires a minimum of 4-6 hours of sunlight per day to persist and also performs well in full sun.

'Captiva' should be mowed at 2 to 2.5 inches with a rotary mower. Water and fertilization requirements are similar to the other St.

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Figure 2. 'Captiva' growing in a shaded setting on the University of Florida campus in Gainesville. Credit: Kevin Kenworthy, July 2009

Augustinegrass cultivars vary depending on geographical location in the state, time of year, soil, shade presence, etc. In general, St. Augustinegrass should be fertilized on an annual basis with 2-4 lbs of nitrogen (N) per 1,000 ft² in north Florida, 2-5 lbs of N per 1,000 ft² in central Florida, and 4-6 lbs N per 1,000 ft² in south Florida. For more information on how to properly apply this amount of fertilizer, please refer to ENH962, "Figuring Out Fertilizer for the Home Lawn" at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP221>. Irrigation should be applied on an as-needed basis, based on temperature, sunlight, soil type, time of year, and rainfall. This could range from twice a week during the summer to every other week in the winter. Be sure to follow all Water Management District and local government restrictions when irrigating.

'Captiva' is in production in sod farms throughout the state of Florida. For a listing of growers in your area, please refer to <http://www.floridasodgrowers.com/CaptivaGrowers.htm>.