

## Best lawngrass and mole cricket control questions

**Q.** What's the best lawngrass for North Florida?

**A.** There is no "best" lawngrass. Choosing a lawngrass involves selecting a grass that best fits the site conditions. Is the site shady, do you have an irrigation system, is salt spray or saltwater a factor...? Means of establishment comes into play: can the grass be established from seeds or does it require vegetative establishment (established from sod, plugs or sprigs). Time and expense involved with maintaining the lawn should be considered. Some lawngrasses require more time and/or money to keep up. Cost of the sod or seed may be a factor. For example, St. Augustinegrass sod usually costs more as compared to centipedegrass sod. Intended use of the lawn may be a factor. Are you trying to prevent erosion on a slope or do you need a play area for children...? Where you expect a lot of foot traffic, you need to consider the wear tolerance of the grass. There are basically seven types of lawngrasses to consider for a Florida lawn. The following UF/IFAS publication will help you in your quest for the "best" lawngrass. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/LH005>

**Q.** When is the best time to control mole crickets?

**A.** Many people panic and treat their lawn with all sorts of pesticides when they see mole crickets in the spring or at the first sign of a brown area in their lawn. What they don't understand is the biology of this pest.

Mole crickets spend the winter mostly as adults in the soil. As the weather warms in late February and March, adult mole crickets emerge and begin to mate. During the mating process, the male makes a chamber in the soil and chirps to attract a female. Attracted females fly to the males. After mating, the male dies. The mated female begins tunneling and laying eggs in the tunnels. After which, she dies. This mating process is occurring in late evening and at night.

Insecticide treatments during the mating and egg laying activity in spring, when mostly adults are present, are not recommended because adults are not easily killed and the chances of reinfestation from subsequent flights and unhatched eggs are high.

Although lawns can suffer some damage in spring, it's better to mark areas of mole cricket activity and target those areas for treatment in mid June through July after the eggs have all hatched and before the nymphs (immature mole crickets) are large enough to do much damage. But don't treat at all if there is no evidence of mole cricket activity.

Additional information on mole crickets is available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/LH039>.

Larry William, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, April 1, 2008