

**Cynodon hybrida Dog Tuff™**  
Dog Tuff™ African Dogtooth Grass



A HARDY NEW TURF GRASS FOR DOG LOVERS AND LOW WATER GARDENS

**DOG TUFF™ AFRICAN DOGTOOTH GRASS**

- VERY drought tolerant
- VERY resistant to dog urine
- LOVES full, hot sun
- EXTREMELY soft under foot
- GROWS happily on dry slopes
- DOESN'T wear thin in the winter like Buffalo Grass
- RECOVERS from excessive foot traffic quickly
- HONEYBEES love the pollen
- STERILE variety so it doesn't spread via seeds



Long-time Colorado-based horticulturist Kelly Grummons, co-owner of Timberline Gardens, is working with David Salman of High Country Gardens to promote a new, super low-water turf grass. It's called Dog Tuff™ African Dogtooth Grass. You can order it now for spring 2014 delivery through High Country Gardens ([HighCountryGardens.com](http://HighCountryGardens.com)). Because it is a seedless, sterile hybrid grass, we propagate it from stem cuttings and sell it in 70 count plug trays. It requires a fraction of the water of traditional turfs and is much more durable than native buffalo grass. It's a very fine strain related to Bermuda grass and is a gorgeous *bright green color*. One of the main desirable characteristics is that it is *highly* resistant to dog urine and foot traffic. Kelly's been testing it for 10 years with his many dogs. It's a warm season grass that is green from June

through October in its recommended zones, 5-9. Two years ago, Kelly only watered it 3 times all summer! Last year he had to water it 8 times due to the extreme drought. It only grows to about 4 inches high but if you choose to mow it, do it weekly in July and August. A bonus that we've found is that honeybees love the pollen of this grass. It's one of their favorite foods! For best results, kill the existing high-water turf then plug the new grass into the dead grass on one-foot intervals. The dead turf acts as a mulch to conserve moisture and reduce weed seed germination. I often apply the pre-emergent herbicide corn gluten at planting time to further reduce weed growth. In the first year as the lawn establishes itself, you will need to weed. By year 3, the turf is so thick that virtually no weeds can exist. We're very excited about this new product and are looking for public places to display it. It requires full sun (at least 6 hours of direct per day) and will grow in any type of soil. Do not plant it where it receives significant shade.



#### HOW DO I PREPARE MY LAWN AREA FOR PLANTING BEFORE MY DOG TUFF™ GRASS IS DELIVERED?

The most efficient way to plant DOG TUFF™ grass is to plant it in existing turf grass. Whether you have Kentucky Blue Grass, Tall Fescue, Bermuda grass, Saint Augustine, Perennial Rye or some other thirsty grass, you will receive best results if you first kill the existing turf grass. Although we always prefer natural lawn and garden products, the most efficient means would be to use a chemical like Glyphosate (Various brand names exist. Check with your local garden center or hardware store) or 20% Acetic Acid (Horticultural strength vinegar). These chemicals only work on grass that is actively growing (not dormant). Kill the old lawn at least 2 weeks before the DOG TUFF™ grass plugs arrive. If you don't kill the old grass, it will compete with the DOG TUFF™ and look unattractive. The ground should be deeply irrigated for a few days before installing the DOG TUFF™.

Alternatively, if you will be planting DOG TUFF™ in bare, freshly cultivated soil there are some different steps. After installing the plugs in bare soil, it is recommended to over-seed the whole area with an *annual grass* such as Annual Rye Grass. This grass germinates very quickly, helping to out-compete weeds that would germinate in the area. The Annual Rye will die the first winter and provide mulch in the spots where the DOG TUFF™ hasn't filled in. This will reduce weed seed germination, cool the soil, prevent wind erosion and look nice while the DOG TUFF™ is becoming established. You should not need to plant Annual Rye Grass the second year.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN I GET MY DOG TUFF™ GRASS PLUGS

You can plant DOG TUFF™ grass plugs in the months of May, June and July in USDA Zone 5; April, May and June in USDA Zones 6/7. Planted on 12-inch centers, a tray of 70 will cover 70 square feet. At this spacing, the DOG TUFF™ grass will fill in completely by August or September. When your plugs arrive, unpack them, water them and put them in a frost-free, shaded area *outdoors* for a few days to acclimate to your area. This is called "hardening them off". Do not plant DOG TUFF™ grass before the last frost as it may be damaged or delayed in growth.

#### INSTALLATION OF DOG TUFF™ GRASS PLUGS

Make sure that the ground is well saturated with water several days ahead of time so that the plugs don't dry out during installation. Apply a light application of organic fertilizer such as an alfalfa meal or sea kelp type fertilizer. Also apply corn gluten granules to prevent weed seed germination. Do not apply corn gluten if you are over-seeding with Annual Rye Grass, as it will prevent that from growing too!



Punch holes in the ground using a metal rod (like a long pry bar or broom handle). If you are doing more than several trays, we suggest purchasing a 1 ½" auger-style drill bit. The longer the bit, the more they cost, but the less bending you need to do. Gently remove the plug from the plug tray by *pushing it up from the bottom!* Pulling it from the top may break off the roots. Insert the plug into the hole, gently squeezing the soil closed from the sides. Do this during the cooler morning or evening hours. Have a water hose with a mist nozzle handy and water in the plugs thoroughly within a half hour of planting. You may need to plant a section and water it before moving on to the next section.

You may want to mark a nylon string every 12 inches with a marking pen to use as a guide in the installation, or simply create a 12" square cardboard jig to guide you. It doesn't matter if the plugs are perfectly spaced, but it looks nice. After all the plugs are installed, water again thoroughly. Water the area lightly 2-3 times a day for a week (unless it's raining). The second week, reduce the light watering to once a day. By the third week reduce watering to every other day and so on. By the next spring, water once or twice a week (depending on the weather). DOG TUFF™ won't be fully drought tolerant until summer of the second season. Once it has filled in and is very thick, it can be watered minimally.

## MAINTENANCE OF DOG TUFF™ GRASS

WATER DOG TUFF™ grass by irrigating less than once a week (depending on the weather). Apply ½ inch to 1 inch of water per irrigation. It's better to irrigate deeply, but less often to encourage grass roots to grow deeply and evade drought. Grass watered shallowly and frequently, will have shallow roots that are more prone to drought damage.

FERTILIZE DOG TUFF™ grass by using corn gluten (liquid or granular) or with a low analysis organic nitrogen source like fertilizers made with alfalfa meal or poultry waste. Corn Gluten is applied in late October, late February and early May. Alfalfa Meal or Poultry Waste is applied in early May and again in mid-September. Don't apply both Corn Gluten and Alfalfa Meal/Poultry Waste. Corn Gluten and/or Alfalfa Meal/Poultry Waste should be irrigated immediately after application. Apply at least ½ inch of water (or apply before a rain storm).

MOW DOG TUFF™ grass as needed, but it does not require mowing. In the Denver area, where the grass was developed, we only mow it in July and August, and possibly in September. Left un-mowed, Dogtooth grass looks like gentle mounds of forest moss. If you choose to mow it, remove no more than ½ inch at a time as it will scalp the grass; making it susceptible to sunburn. Scalped/sun burned grass will eventually recover.

## AVOID USING WEED KILLERS ON DOG TUFF™ GRASS

Dogtooth grass is *very* sensitive to broadleaf weed killing herbicides like 2,4-D, Dicamba, etc. as well as all-purpose weed killers like Round Up™ (Glyphosate) and Killzall™. These herbicides may be used judiciously when the grass is completely dormant (no green showing) on weeds that emerge in the late fall, winter or early spring. Using broadleaf weed killers when the grass is out of dormancy will kill it. Weeds that appear during the green stage of Dogtooth grass need to be removed manually or spot treated with an herbicide very carefully. Horticultural Vinegar (from 6%-20%) would be a safer choice. Spray only the weed; avoid the DOG TUFF™ grass. Unlike other grass varieties, do not use weed killers to "edge" your DOG TUFF™ grass as the chemicals will be drawn into the grass plants and kill a much larger area than just the desired edge. Edge using a weed whacker or edging tool.

## USE THE PRE-EMERGENT HERBICIDE CORN GLUTEN TO PREVENT WEEDS ON DOG TUFF™ GRASS

As an alternative to using traditional lawn weed herbicides, we suggest using the botanical product corn gluten several times a year to prevent weed seed germination. In the Denver area, we apply it in late October, late February and again in early May. When corn gluten (the portion of the corn kernel not used for flour) begins to break down on the soil's surface it releases dipeptides (proteins) that prevent weed seeds from becoming viable plants. It also provides a low level of natural Nitrogen (about 9%), which is beneficial to the growth of the grass. Corn Gluten can be applied as a granule with a fertilizer spreader or as a liquid through a hose-end sprayer or pump sprayer.