

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS – A SMALL BUT VALUABLE CULTIVATED GRASS OF THE TEMPERATE CLIMATE ZONE

Summary

The Kentucky bluegrass is an example of meadow grass species widely spread in Poland and in the world. It is commonly found on roadsides, ditches, forest fringes, forest clearings as well as on embankments or escarpments. This small (40-60 cm) and apparently delicate grass forms a dense and strong sward and equally strong springy and tear-resistant turf. It is characterized by the creeping or loose tufted type of tillering and a large resistance to trampling. This makes it useful in pastures, meadows and lawns of different type. It is particularly recommended for recreational and sports lawns. When flowering, Kentucky bluegrass is mainly identified by its morphology and colour of inflorescence (blue-green with a shade of purple) which is a true, pyramid-shaped panicle. In the vegetative growth

stage, its identification is based on the leaf morphology. Its leaf blades are linear, boat-shape tipped with two distinct furrows, the so called "ski track", running parallel along the midrib. Kentucky bluegrass is rich in numerous cultivars (29). Lawn and uni-clonal apomictic varieties (23 and 25) and those of foreign breeding (19) prevail among them. Majority of them have been derived from ecotypes. This grass does not belong to high-yielding species but its yield is characterized by a good quality, significant taste values and favorable chemical composition. This makes it to be considered in Poland as one of more important species among feed grasses. Kentucky bluegrass is also a valuable lawn grass. Apart from perennial rye-grass, red fescue or sheep's fescue, it is a basic component of most lawn grass mixtures.