



Solarization

Solarization can be an effective method to control or eliminate Bermuda grass by using the sun's heat to essentially cook the grass under a clear plastic tarp. The process involves covering the area with clear plastic for an extended period, typically 4-6 weeks, during the hottest part of the year. This traps heat and raises soil temperatures, killing the grass and its roots.

Here's a more detailed explanation:

1. Preparation:

- **Mow low:** Cut the Bermuda grass as short as possible, ideally down to the soil level.
- **Clear the area:** Remove any debris, clippings, or thatch to ensure good contact between the plastic and the soil.
- **Water thoroughly:** Ensure the soil is moist, as moisture helps conduct heat and enhance the solarization process.
- **Level the ground:** This helps the plastic lie flat and minimizes air pockets.
- **Prepare the plastic:** Use a clear, ultraviolet-protected polyethylene plastic sheet that extends a few feet beyond the area you want to treat.

2. Solarization:

- **Cover the area:** Carefully spread the plastic over the prepared area, burying the edges to create a seal and prevent air circulation.
- **Secure the plastic:** Use bricks, soil, or other weights to keep the plastic taut and in place.
- **Wait:** Allow the sun to heat the soil for a minimum of 4-6 weeks, or longer for more established Bermuda grass.

3. Post-Solarization:

- **Monitor:** Check the area periodically to ensure the plastic remains intact and the ground underneath is hot.
- **Remove the plastic:** Once the grass is dead (indicated by a lack of green growth), remove the plastic.
- **Cultivate gently:** Avoid deep cultivation to prevent bringing up new weed seeds.
- **Replant or re-establish:** The area is now ready for replanting or other landscaping activities.

Important Considerations:

1. **Timing:** Solarization is most effective during the hottest months of the year when sunlight is most intense.
2. **Soil type:** Soil texture and moisture levels can affect the effectiveness of solarization.
3. **Slope:** South or southwest-facing slopes are ideal for maximizing solar radiation.
4. **Limitations:** Solarization may not be as effective for weeds with deeply buried roots or rhizomes.
5. **Maintenance:** After solarization, continue to monitor for any regrowth and remove weeds promptly.

Bermuda Grass - Important Considerations:

- **Don't break the roots:** Avoid breaking the Bermuda grass roots and rhizomes during removal, as each piece can potentially grow into a new plant.
- **Dispose of removed grass:** Bag and dispose of the removed grass properly to prevent further spread.
- **Consider competition:** Planting other grasses (like tall fescue) that can compete with Bermuda grass may help prevent its regrowth, according to The Turfgrass Group.