

and turn black. Due to extensive root damage, plants are not able to withstand stresses such as drought, insect, or disease invasion. Sampling of soils for a nematode assay is the only sure way to determine if they are in high enough populations to cause damage. Prepare soil samples similar to those discussed in the disease control section and submit them to a reputable nematode lab.

Control begins with those management practices which favor good turf growth. These include proper watering, fertilization, and mowing practices. Few nematicides are available. Proper turf management is becoming increasingly important to mask nematode presence. Consult your local county agent or the publication, NPPP-18, for the latest nematode control recommendations. Follow label recommendations explicitly.

## Harvesting

Turfgrass is harvested when sod has developed enough strength to remain intact with minimum soil adhering when cut. Time required to produce a marketable sod from initial establishment depends on turfgrass species, soil type, and growing conditions. Time required between harvests for most turf sod is listed as actual growing months in Table 5.

Table 5. Time in growing months required from planting to harvest for various turf sod grasses (modified from 4).

Cultivar	Growing Months	
	Initial Establishment	After Harvest
Common centipedegrass	18	6 to 12
Centennial centipedegrass	18	9 to 15
Tifgreen bermudagrass	6 to 12	3 to 6
Tifway bermudagrass	6 to 12	4 to 8
Emerald zoysiagrass	12 to 24	13 to 20
Matrella zoysiagrass	12 to 24	15 to 20
Meyer zoysiagrass	12 to 24	11 to 18
St. Augustinegrass	10 to 18	10 to 18
Bahiagrass	12 to 24	12 to 24

Several weeks prior to harvest, the turf should be conditioned in order to enhance its color. Suggested practices include mowing only with a reel mower, applying iron within 2 weeks of harvest, and applying no chemicals during the week prior to harvest. Using a sweeper or vacuum to remove mowing clippings the last 3 to 4 weeks leading up to harvest also improves the turf's appearance.

Sod must never be cut when under moisture stress. The cutter blade bounces out of the ground, the sod has little strength, and turf is under stress by the time the owner receives it.

Mechanical sod cutters harvest strips 12 to 16 inches wide. Growers with less than 100 acres

commonly use a small, hand-operated, walk-behind unit which has a 150 to 200 sq. yd. cutting capacity per hour. Larger growers usually use tractor-mounted and/or self-propelled harvesters capable of cutting 600 to 800 sq. yd. per hour (Figure 5).

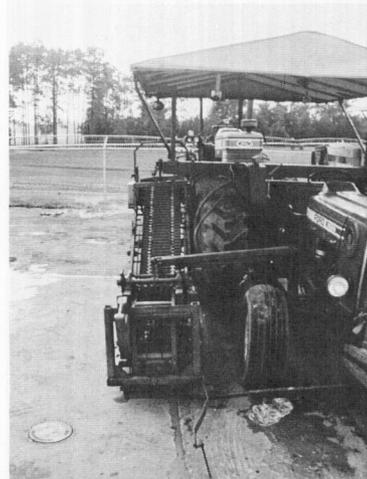


Figure 5. Walk-behind (top), tractor-mounted (middle), and pull-behind (bottom) sod harvesters.