

## Buffalo Grass (Edited by Mr. G)

Buffalo grass is a very hardy grass and grows mostly in the North American prairies. The North American prairies lie in the middle of the continent and have a dry climate during the summer, and a very cold and windy climate in the winter.

Buffalo grass is a warm-season, native, perennial shortgrass. It grows between 2 and 5 inches (5-13 cm) tall. It has a round hollow stem with gray, green curly leaves. The leaves are 1/10 " wide and 2" long.

In winter it turns tan and in the autumn it turns lavender. It is very drought resistant. In dry seasons it gets brown, and stops growing, and goes dormant. It is also heat and cold resistant.

Buffalo grass sends out many thin roots that can reach 5 feet below the ground, forming a dense sod. Seventy percent of the roots are in the first 6 inches (15 cm) of soil.

Buffalo grass is one of the most important grasses on the short grass prairies. Livestock, white-tailed deer, buffalo, pronghorns, jackrabbits and prairie dogs use it as forage. It was the main source of food for the buffalo when huge herds roamed the prairies. Mountain plovers<sup>1</sup> build their nests in buffalo grass.

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<sup>1</sup> a shorebird that has a short beak and tail and long pointed wings.