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ALERT!

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To: Buyers of Warm Season Sod

From: Terry Hollifield, Executive Director

Re: Georgia Certified Turfgrass

Over the last few years and driven by the rebounding economy, Georgia has seen an increase in sod farms and individuals brokering sod. As I am sure you are aware, sod quality and purity vary greatly from farm to farm based on management and the original source of planting stock. Unfortunately, only about half of the sod farms in Georgia participate in the GCIA Turfgrass Certification Program which is a third party inspection service aimed at ensuring genetic purity and freedom from noxious weeds. As a result, we have recently received numerous reports of contaminated, non-certified sod being purchased and installed on projects around the state. On the next page, I have included a photo of one such instance for your reference.

The only way to ensure that you are receiving sod of the highest quality and purity is to purchase GCIA Blue Tag Certified Sod. A list of participating growers can be found in the GCIA Turfgrass Buyers Guide on our website – www.georgiacrop.com. In particular, every shipment of certified sod must be accompanied by a GCIA Turfgrass Certificate; I have included a sample on the next page. This certificate documents that the sod purchased was produced on a certified and inspected farm.

Also worthy of note, we have heard of instances of non-certified sod being misrepresented as certified sod. Please be aware that the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Live Plant Certificate is NOT equivalent to the GCIA Blue Tag Certificate. The Live Plant Certificate is indicative of apparent freedom from weeds, pests and diseases and NOT an indication of purity or quality.

Please visit www.georgiacrop.com to view the GCIA Turfgrass Buyers Guide which includes a list of all certified farms in Georgia and the varieties available for sale. Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at your convenience. Thank you for your time and attention.

Non-Certified Tifway 419 sod installed on a project in middle Georgia:



Sample of GCIA Blue Tag Certificate

<p>GEORGIA CERTIFIED TURFGRASS</p> <p>KNOWN PEDIGREE KNOWN QUALITY</p> <p>Certification Warranty Disclaimer</p> <p>The grass this certificate represents was produced in accordance with the published standards of the Georgia Crop Improvement Association, Inc. (GCIA). The GCIA makes no warranty of any kind, expressed or implied, including merchantability, or fitness for purpose. The grower whose name appears on this certificate is solely responsible for the information thereon and for the proper use of this certificate.</p>	<p>GCIA CERTIFIED TURFGRASS</p>
<p>Kind: _____</p> <p>Variety / Brand: _____</p> <p>Quantity:</p> <p> Sprigs: _____</p> <p> Sod: _____</p> <p>Billing Invoice: _____</p> <p>Field #: _____</p> <p>Harvest Date: _____</p>	<p>Georgia Crop Improvement Association, Inc. 2425 South Millledge Avenue Athens, GA 30605-1639 Phone 706-542-2351 Fax 706-542-9397</p>
<p>Grower Name & Address: _____</p>	<p>Certificate Number: 000000</p> <p>This grass was grown in accordance with a program designed to promote purity by adherence to published standards.¹</p> <p>This certificate must be completed and attached to each bill of lading or invoice representing certified sprigs or sod produced in accordance with the Georgia Crop Improvement Association rules and regulations for production of vegetatively propagated certified turfgrass.</p> <p>I certify the information provided is true and meets the Georgia Crop Improvement Association requirements for vegetatively / seeded propagated turfgrass certification.</p> <p>Authorized Representative of Grower: _____</p> <p>Copies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original to Buyer (with each delivery) Pink to GCIA Office (at delivery) Yellow retained by Grower
<p>¹ The GCIA Turfgrass Certification Standards are available upon request.</p> <p>MEMBER OF ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL SEED CERTIFYING AGENCIES</p>	