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## UF develops new St. Augustinegrass variety

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CHARLESTON, SC – Lawn enthusiasts seeking an environmentally friendly St. Augustinegrass variety now have a new option to consider. Captiva St. Augustine is a dark green grass that requires significantly less mowing and is the first turfgrass released in 35 years with resistance to the southern chinch bug. Captiva is the product of over a decade of research by the University of Florida and is expected to flourish in any subtropical climate.

“Captiva has many improved qualities,” said Dr. Russell Nagata, the UF researcher who developed the grass. “The top priority has been to find the next chinch bug resistant St. Augustinegrass. That’s been a long time in the making. I was also personally looking for a grass that did not bind me down to weekly mowing. Now I can go away on a two week vacation without having to worry about what my lawn will look like when I get home. We can, with confidence, probably eliminate every other mowing. That will help reduce gasoline use.”

A reduction in mowing and the resulting emissions and fuel savings aren’t the only environmental benefits Captiva offers. Nagata and other researchers believe that because Captiva has a darker green hue than most other St. Augustinegrasses, it will reduce consumer’s efforts to “green-up” the grass with fertilizer. But most importantly, pesticide use will be at a minimum with Captiva because of its inherent resistance to chinch bugs and the planthopper insect.

Captiva is the first St. Augustinegrass to offer resistance to the southern chinch bug since Floratam St. Augustine was released in 1972. Floratam’s resistance lasted for approximately 13 years. While Captiva’s resistance will also have a shelf life, its position in the marketplace will remain strong because of its low growth habit.

“Warmer climates have long had an affinity for St. Augustinegrass, but one of the drawbacks has been its susceptibility to chinch bugs,” said Tobey Wagner, president of Sod Solutions, a private turfgrass development company charged with Captiva’s licensing and marketing efforts. “Chinch bugs do incredible damage to lawns. Through exhaustive research and many years of looking for a replacement for Floratam, Captiva was developed. I believe this variety will become the new St. Augustine standard throughout the United States and the world.”

The release of Captiva involves a three-way agreement with the Florida Sod Growers Cooperative (FSGC), the University of Florida and Sod Solutions. This partnership is unique in that it combines the research capability of the University of Florida, the hands-on turfgrass knowledge of the FSGC and its member-growers and the marketing and technical experience of Sod Solutions. The

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agreement is designed to support the FSGC's organizational goals and provides for the release of Captiva St. Augustine to sod producers worldwide. Through the agreement, the FSGC, the University of Florida and Sod Solutions will participate in marketing and program oversight.

According to Wagner, the release agreement is structured to benefit FSGC constituents and the state's turfgrass industry. It will provide them with a viable new turfgrass selection, and expand the practicable choices available to anyone who wants a chinch bug resistant, dark green St. Augustinegrass that handles environmental stresses well and needs less mowing.

For more information, visit [www.sodsolutions.com](http://www.sodsolutions.com) or call 843-849-1288.



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