

Lethal Viral Necrosis St. Augustinegrass Cultivar Alternatives

June 2019

<u>Cultivars</u>	<u>Considerations in Southern Florida</u>	<u>Other Notes</u>
Bitterblue	An older variety of St. Augustinegrass. It is generally more susceptible to gray leafspot (<i>Pyricularia grisea</i>), take-all root rot (<i>Gaeumannomyces graminis</i> var. <i>graminis</i>) and large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) fungal diseases than Floratam. Shade tolerance better than Floratam. Mowing, irrigation and fertilization needs similar to Floratam.	May be Bitterblue “types” rather than one genetically distinct cultivar. Genetic work being done at University of Florida to further define “types.”
CitraBlue (LVN testing not completed yet)	A new University of Florida release. Good disease resistance to large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate), take-all root rot (<i>Gaeumannomyces graminis</i> var. <i>graminis</i>) and gray leafspot (<i>Pyricularia grisea</i>). Dense lower growth, better shade tolerance & slightly better drought tolerance than Floratam.	<u>Testing for resistance to lethal viral necrosis has not been completed yet.</u>
Classic (not yet LVN tested)	Greater large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) susceptibility than Floratam. Other management and pest problems similar to Floratam. Good cold tolerance.	This turf has <u>not yet been tested for resistance to lethal viral necrosis.</u>
DeltaShade	Management and pest problems similar to Floratam, except greater large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) susceptibility. Shade tolerance better than Floratam.	A lighter green variety
Palmetto	Typically more susceptible to large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) and gray leafspot (<i>Pyricularia grisea</i>) fungal diseases than Floratam. Insects can also be a problem. It is slightly more dwarf than Floratam.	A lighter green variety. Quite tolerant of herbicides listed for St. Augustinegrass when used according to label.
ProVista (LVN testing not completed yet)	A Scotts Floratam with two gene modifications - one for resistance to glyphosate, and the second for reduced mowing requirements, enhanced quality, and shade tolerance according to Scotts.	<u>Testing for resistance to lethal viral necrosis has not been completed yet.</u>
Raleigh	Very susceptible to large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) fungal disease in southern Florida, and chinch bugs. Better adapted to clay, medium to low pH soils. Very good cold tolerance.	Foliar iron supplements may help manage its tendency to yellow. Tolerant of herbicides listed for St. Augustinegrass when used according to label.

<u>Dwarf Cultivars</u>	<u>Considerations in Southern Florida</u>
Captiva	Not recommended in Florida due to establishment after planting and pathogen problems.
Delmar	Susceptible to large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) fungal disease, chinch bug, and tropical sod webworm. Has a tendency to become thatchy. Good cold tolerance.
Sapphire	Susceptible to chinch bug and tropical sod webworm damage. Greater large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) susceptibility than Floratam. Also, quite susceptible to other fungal pathogens and becomes thatchy.
Seville	Susceptible to chinch bug and tropical sod webworm damage. Greater large patch (<i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> isolate) susceptibility than Floratam. Also, quite susceptible to other fungal pathogens and becomes thatchy. Cold sensitive.

Use reputable vendors when purchasing St. Augustinegrass cultivars. Suggested alternative cultivars may take some effort to find at retail outlets. See link below for grower sources.

It is believed that all varieties of St. Augustinegrass, bermudagrass, bahiagrass, paspalum, and crabgrass weeds can acquire lethal viral necrosis. Like Floratam, all St. Augustinegrass cultivars may develop elongated yellow spotting on leaf blades and have slowed growth. However, **only the Floratam cultivar of St. Augustinegrass is known to be killed** by lethal viral necrosis. Classic, CitraBlue and ProVista cultivars have not been tested yet. Zoysiagrass is a possible replacement that does not acquire or transmit the viral pathogens. It requires a very good irrigation system along with soil preparation that incorporates some organic matter prior to planting. However, if Floratam did well on the site before succumbing to lethal viral necrosis, zoysiagrass probably also will if properly managed. Zoysiagrass has its own assortment of insect and disease problems, and requires high light levels.

Sources of Turfgrass (mostly wholesale): <https://floridaturf.com/turf>

For more information:

St. Augustinegrass for Florida Lawns (publication): <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/LH/LH01000.pdf>

Lethal Viral Necrosis of Floratam St. Augustinegrass (publication):

<http://discover.pbcgov.org/coextension/horticulture/PDF/Lethal%20Viral%20Necrosis%203.2018.pdf>

Lethal Viral Necrosis of Floratam St. Augustinegrass (website):

<http://discover.pbcgov.org/coextension/horticulture/Pages/Lethal-Necrosis.aspx>

Sources: University of Florida - Philip Harmon, PhD, Plant Pathology; Laurie Trenholm, PhD, Environmental Horticulture; Kevin Kenworthy, PhD, Agronomy

Author: William Schall, Palm Beach County Extension