

## Lethal Viral Necrosis St. Augustinegrass Cultivar Alternatives

November 2020

| <u>Cultivars</u>                                       | <u>Considerations in Southern Florida</u>  | <u>Other Notes</u>   |
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| <b>Bitterblue</b>                                      | No longer recommended for LVN infected Floratam replacement. It is generally a mix of known and unknown St. Augustinegrass cultivars. Raleigh is common, and it may even include Floratam.   | Not recommended for replacement of LVN infected Floratam St. Augustinegrass  |
| <b>CitraBlue</b><br>(UF LVN testing not completed yet) | A new University of Florida release. Good disease resistance to gray leaf-spot ( <i>Pyricularia grisea</i> ). Dense growth, better shade & slightly better drought tolerance than Floratam, and a darker blue/green color.               | <u>Testing for resistance to lethal viral necrosis has not been completed yet</u> , but continues to look promising. Stay tuned.   |
| <b>Classic</b><br>(Not UF LVN tested)                  | Greater large patch ( <i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> LP 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> .   |
| <b>DeltaShade</b>                                      | Management and pest problems similar to Floratam, except greater large patch ( <i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> LP isolate) susceptibility. Shade tolerance better than Floratam.   | A lighter green variety  |
| <b>Palmetto</b>  | 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. Currently the most recommended cultivar for Floratam replacement in Palm Beach County. |
| <b>ProVista</b><br>(Not UF LVN tested)                 | A Scotts cultivar with genetic modification, one for resistance to glyphosate, and a second for reduced mowing requirements, enhanced quality, and shade tolerance. Info is from Scotts..  | <u>Testing for resistance to lethal viral necrosis has not been completed yet</u> by the University of Florida.  |
| <b>Raleigh</b>   | Very susceptible to large patch ( <i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> LP isolate) fungal disease in southern Florida, and chinch bugs. Better adapted to clay, medium to low pH soils. Very good cold tolerance. More commonly used further north. | 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>   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Captiva</b>         | Not recommended in Florida due to establishment after planting and pathogen problems.   |
| <b>Delmar</b>          | Susceptible to large patch ( <i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> LP isolate) fungal disease, chinch bug, and tropical sod webworm. Has a tendency to become thatchy. Good cold tolerance.   |
| <b>Sapphire</b>        | Susceptible to chinch bug and tropical sod webworm damage. Greater large patch ( <i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> LP isolate) susceptibility than Floratam. Also, quite susceptible to other fungal pathogens and becomes thatchy.                 |
| <b>Seville</b>         | Susceptible to chinch bug and tropical sod webworm damage. Greater large patch ( <i>Rhizoctonia solani</i> LP 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 the virus that causes 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 (website):

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

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

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