

Make your seed purchasing profitable



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The cost of grass seeds varies from one supplier to another. The quality of seeds can also vary from one batch to another within the same company. How can we get our money's worth? Here is a simple way to evaluate the costs among various suppliers. This method will help you make the right decisions. It is based upon two factors :

- the germinative capacity, and
- the purity of the batch.

The purity relates to the proportion of pure seeds within a batch. We must realize that a seed bag never contains 100% of the desired cultivar. Let's take the following example :

We purchase 25 kilos of creeping bentgrass from the Providence cultivar and with a 85% purity rate. The 25 kg bag will in fact only contain 21.25 kg of the desired seed (85% of 25 kg). The remaining 3.5 kg could be made of weed seeds, soil particles and/or organic residue (parts of the plant).

It is important to note that the percentage of purity varies from one batch to another and it should be checked on a regular basis.

The germinative capacity represents the percentage of seeds that do germinate and such a value also varies from one batch to another. To fully understand the importance of such a factor, let's take the same practical example :

With the same 25 kg bag containing only 21.25 kg of the desired seed, if the germinative capacity of the seed is 75%, only 15.75 kg of the seeds will germinate (75% of 21.25 kg).

In short, we want to know how many seeds in the bag will be efficient. To obtain such a value, we must multiply the purity rate by the germinative capacity. In the previous example, if we multiply 85% by 75%, the percentage of efficient seeds would be roughly 64%.

Now that we are aware of these two fundamental principles, we can compare different seed bags in order to determine the best price-quality ratio.

Using the same example, we now want to know the real cost of the Providence creeping bentgrass. If a 25 kg bag costs \$157.50, we can assume that the Providence creeping bentgrass that will germinate costs \$10 per kg, i.e. \$157.50 for 15.75 kg of efficient seed ($\$157.50 \div 15.75 \text{ kg}$).

Now, let's compare this with another supplier also offering Providence creeping bentgrass but at the cost of \$171 for a 25 kg bag. However, this seed has a 90% purity ratio and a 80% germinative capacity. To obtain the percentage of really efficient seeds, we multiply 90% by 80%, which gives 72%. In the 25 kg bag, we thus find 18 kg ($72\% \times 25 \text{ kg}$) of Providence creeping bentgrass that will germinate. The cost of efficient seed is thus \$9.50 per kg ($\$171 \div 18 \text{ kg}$).

Even if the competitor offers a 25 kg bag for a lesser cost, the price-quality ratio is also lesser.

The above examples illustrate the importance of inquiring about the purity ratio and the germinative capacity before purchasing seeds. With such information, you are able to evaluate the percentage of pure seeds that will germinate and thus choose the best batch at the best price.