

## THE KING AND HIS CASTLE

Having spent a number of years persevering with our Kikuyu front lawn that was in place when we bought our house, the time finally came to replace it in the Autumn of 2008. The task had been delayed because of several years of drought conditions in Sydney which had meant that soil moisture levels were very low.

One of the main problems with the old lawn was the fact that the house faces the South creating too much shade for the Kikuyu. The combination of shade and dry conditions resulted in the lawn getting thinner and thinner as the drought went on. Coupled with this is the fact that we are also in a spot in western Sydney that is subject to numerous frosts over the Winter, which really restricted the growth of the Kikuyu, keeping it thin and allowing weeds to invade.

After some careful consideration we decided to rip the old front lawn up in February 2008 and replace it with 'Kings Pride' buffalo, on advice from J & B Turf. The process was started by poisoning the old lawn and then rotary hoeing it a couple of times. The second cultivation included the application of OziVerm (worm castings) to improve the structure of the old soil. We also added some cow manure and an organic rock Phosphate fertilizer to give the turf and good start.

The result has been quite dramatic, in fact neighbours three doors down decided to re-turf their front lawn a week after ours, so we had a unique opportunity to compare the two during establishment. Unfortunately they decided to go with another variety of Buffalo (one which is advertised heavily) and although it's hard not to be biased we always felt that ours looked much better.

Both lawns have now been down twelve months and have settled down, but there is no doubt in my mind that the King's Pride performs much better in our location, it appears to be more shade tolerant, and holds its colour much better over the Winter, both attributes that were important to us from the outset.

And it appears that we're not that biased after all, another of our neighbours who had also been conducting his own evaluation of the two new lawns in the street, approached me last Spring to ask what variety we had used, and has since re-turfed his lawn with King's Pride.