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New strains stand out at fescue trials
By MARK LESLIE
BELTSVILLE, Md. — Oh, how the mighty have fallen in the ever more popular world of fine fescues. With the release of the first-year findings in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's new National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), only two of the previous four-year trial's top 10 fine fescues are in this top 10 and only three are even in the top 30 after the first year of this study.

And this with 35 fewer varieties being tested. Turfgrass breeders have made major strides, improving color, heat- and drought-tolerance and resistance to foliar diseases, particularly...36

Cities turn to non-profit management groups
By PETER BLAIR
Seattle recently turned over operation of its three public courses to a newly formed, non-profit corporation, a move being considered in a growing number of U.S. cities.

"It's gaining favor throughout the country because it works," said Lynnie Cooke, chairman of the Baltimore Municipal Golf Corp., which is frequently cited as a model operation by non-profit advocates.

Since assuming control in 1985, BMGC has made $4.5 million in improvements to the city's five golf facilities and is planning a sixth course, all at no expense to taxpayers. Annual rounds increased from 136,000 in 1984 to 258,000 in 1990. Green fees, reportedly the lowest among major municipal layouts in the Mid-Atlantic, have remained at $10.50 since 1987. Two of its courses, Pine Ridge and Mt. Pleasant, are generally considered among the top 10 public layouts in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia.

In light of Baltimore's success, Indianapolis is set to hand over the reins to three of its public courses to a non-profit organization, Cooke said. Newark, N.J., officials visited Cooke in early July and are seriously considering establishing a...57