

Simplot patents zoysia, bent varieties

POST FALLS, Idaho — Scientists at Simplot Turf & Horticulture have announced the patenting of two novel turfgrass species. Dr. Doug Brede and Susan Samudio cooperated in the identification, breeding and patenting of Seashore zoysiagrass (*Zoysia sinica*) and Idaho bentgrass (*Agrostis idahoensis*),

two obscure grasses that had never been used for turf purposes before. These patents represent the first time an entire species of grass has been developed from nature and patented for turf use.

Brede believes Idaho bentgrass has a dual purpose. "When we were first developing

Idaho bent, we were targeting it as an alternative to *Poa trivialis* for winter overseeding of dormant Bermudagrass putting greens," he said. Simplot harvested its first commercial crop of the variety, GolfStar Idaho bentgrass, in 1999.

Salt-tolerant Seashore zoysiagrass was discovered by Brede during trips to the shores of Eastern China. He found it growing along the beach, often with saltwater washing over its roots. Samudio, a Simplot plant breeder, developed the germplasm into the variety J-14, which is currently ranked in the zoysia national test. It is set for commercial seed release in 2001.



Simplot's Doug Brede and Susan Samudio have new zoysia and bentgrass patents.

Toro, Ransomes settle patent suit

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — The Toro Co. announced that Exmark Manufacturing Co. Inc., a subsidiary of Toro based in Beatrice, Neb., has settled patent infringement claims it alleged against Ransomes Inc., a subsidiary of Textron Inc.

Exmark filed the suit last September, claiming the mowing deck lift feature of certain of Bob-Cat branded zero-turn riding rotary mowers produced by Ransomes Inc. infringed on U.S. Patent No. 5,816,033.

However, at the time the suit was filed, Ransomes had already redesigned the lift mechanism and is currently manufacturing these Bob-Cat mowers with this non-infringing lift.

Both parties have agreed to settle the matter for \$125,600.

VAN WATERS AND ROGERS ACQUIRES TURF INDUSTRIES

AUSTIN, Texas — Van Waters and Rogers Inc. has acquired Turf Industries, Inc. of Dallas and Houston. Turf Industries joins Van Waters and Rogers' Professional Products and Services (PPS) business unit, which services the turf and specialty agricultural markets.

Turf Industries/Van Waters & Rogers Inc. will retain its current staff and locations that serve the golf course and professional turfgrass management markets in Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma.

According to John Bolanos, vice president of Van Waters & Rogers' PP&S, the acquisition of Turf Industries sets the pace for its growth as a national distributor to the professional turf and ornamental marketplace.

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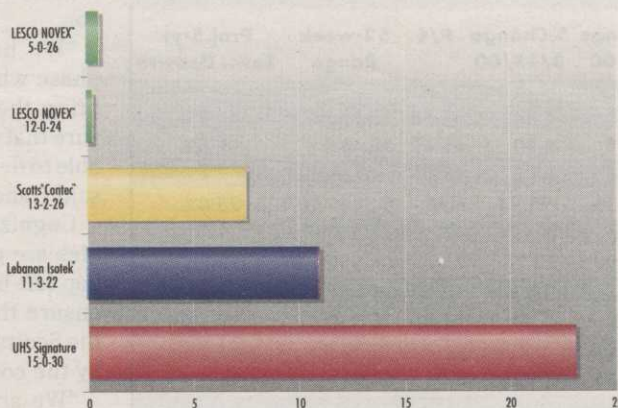
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