EDITORIAL FOCUS: Winter Preparation

Seed companies release new varieties for winter overseeding

By JOEL JOYNER

CORVALIS, Ore.—This fall, new introductions will be breaking into the winter overseeding market offering golf course superintendents a salt tolerant ryegrass, improved seed blends, and higher quality turfgrasses.

The goal for golf course superintendents, particularly those below the transition zone, is to present a playing surface that’s both attractive and enticing to golfers as Bermudagrass goes dormant.

The overseeding market, therefore, is a lucrative one for seed companies, and new products this year aim to bring value to golf courses and golfers alike. Although most seed companies primarily focus on permanent turf, they also have been looking at new ways to ease the golf course superintendent’s seasonal challenge to accommodate golfers.

SEED RESEARCH OF OREGON

SR 4500 is the newest perennial ryegrass to be released this year from SRO. “It’s going to work better for superintendents the further South they are in the United States,” said Skip Lynch, technical agronomist. “If they’re in the northern end of the overseeding market, it may hang in there a little too long. It has a high endophyte and offers a fairly dark green color. It’s a good looking grass with lots of fillers.”

A lot of companies sell individual seed components to allow superintendents to make their own blends. SRO has taken that additional step out of the process by offering their own new blends of Champion Fine and Champion Max.

“Champion Fine is a blend of our ryegrass with the SR 5100 chewings fescue,” Lynch said. “It makes a little better playing surface because the ball sits up a little better. The fescue has a much stiffer leaf blade. It transitions very well, and you won’t lose any color having the chewings in there.”

“The Champion Max blend is basically for greens overseeding,” said Lynch. “It has Poa trivialis in it, and you can take it down to a very fine mowing height. It has excellent color, is very dark green, and has a quick transition in the springtime.”

Turf Seed is showcasing four new varieties this season; BrightStar SLT is a salt-tolerant ryegrass; Citation Fore which is their highest ranking perennial ryegrass in the latest National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) trials; and two Poa trivialis varieties called WinterPlay and Wintertime.

Dormant seeding in the fall provides greater insurance against winter damage

By KEVIN ROSS

“There’s been a lot of talk over the past several months concerning winter damage on golf courses. High-profile events, such as the 2001 US Senior Open at Salem Country Club in Mass., caused the issue front and center (GCN Aug. 2001). Winter damage is becoming a larger phenomenon. Many states throughout the northern United States and in large parts of Canada sustain turf loss every year. Each year, many superintendents experience the same agony that superintendent Kip Tyler did this year at Salem CC. However, the work done at Salem CC has spurred much thought on how to prepare your golf course for the dreaded winter months.

THE DORMANT SOLUTION

Dormant seeding is one technique that has not received much attention. A successful program of dormant seeding can produce spectacular results in the spring, and it is a great insurance policy in the event that any winter damage occurs.

Dormant seeding is done in the fall, after soil temperatures have declined sufficiently, so complete germination will not occur. However, soil temperatures must be sufficient for the initial stages of germination to occur.

The first step in the seed germination process is water absorption. In the second step, the seed undergoes a swelling, which initiates several biochemical and physiological events. This ultimately results in the development of a seedling turfgrass plant.

In dormant seeding, the seed undergoes

Colorado resort relies on overseas work force

By JOEL JOYNER

KEYSTONE, Colo.—As labor shortages continued to disrupt golf course maintenance operations this past summer, the River and Ranch golf courses here turned to international recruitment with the H-2B visa program. It worked out so well that other courses would be wise to consider bringing in visa workers for next summer, said Steve Cornelli, director of golf courses at the Keystone Resort.

"We were struggling to get enough maintenance people for a single course," said Cornelli, "but we now have four golf courses and the H-2B visa program has really worked well."

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WinterStar.

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WinterStar.

There was extensive work on BrightStar SLT for salt tolerance over at Pure Seed Testing [Hubbard, Ore.], said Tom Stanley, marketing manager. "What they did was place all the NTEP perennials into a salt water bath. They subjected them to the bath, at 17,000 parts/million, for nine weeks."

Most of the varieties were destroyed. "Some, however, still had green and growing tissue," Stanley said. "BrightStar SLT was one of the top survivors. It also has a good resistance to red thread. It will work well in areas with cool, moist, maritime winters."

Citation Fore will require less mowing, according to Stanley. "It has reduced steminess and reduced vertical growth in the spring and summer," he said. "It also has a 54 percent endophyte content, so it will be fairly resistant to above-ground feeding insects."

WinterPlay and WinterStar, two Poa trivialis varieties released by Turf Seed in limited quantities last year, will be more available this fall. "They'll be ideal for the South, where they're just going to be temporary grasses," said Stanley. "Also, the Northeastern and upper Midwest regions where there's wet, shady areas difficult for growing turf or even in shade mixes for permanent turf."

Pennington Seed

Pennington Seed, in Madison, Ga., is offering two new perennial ryegrasses that were both bred at Rutgers University.

"Applaud provides great color and has a very nice leaf texture," said Russ Nicholson, national sales manager. "We've found that it transitions very well. It's not one of these varieties you plant and have concerns about next spring in the South. It doesn't take the heat very well."

The other variety, Integra, will be available in limited quantities this fall for commercial use. "Next year, we'll step up production," Nicholson said. "It will still be in limited supply, but we'll have a few million pounds of it by then."

"Like the Applaud seed, Integra was also bred at Rutgers for disease resistance, a dark green color, and good texture," said Nicholson. "In trials, we've found it to be a strong performer for the overseeding market."

Montgomery CC

Invitational. The Southern Women's Amateur is scheduled for 2002.

Future plans are being laid for improving the landscaping around the clubhouse and enhancing the "no play" areas of the course. "It's got such a great history, not just in Alabama but in the Southeastern United States," said Greg Plotner, vice president of business development at IGM.

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- Enhance early plant growth and vigor
- Build greater shoot mass
- Increase uptake of soil nutrients and moisture
- Increase photosynthesis

UHS Signature Brand Fertilizers with Prospect® Plus have been impregnated with a proprietary nutrient solution that has shown a remarkable ability to improve vigor, quality and stress tolerance in turf, trees and ornamentals. The patented additive in Prospect® Plus has been tested extensively on many crops, including turf, in laboratory, greenhouse and field studies in the U.S. and several other countries.

Those studies have consistently shown a positive effect on early plant growth and development and with mature plants under stress. Soil farm results show that turf can be harvested earlier due to increased root mass and quicker establishment from seed or sprigs. Mature turf has greater root mass with a noted "tighter" visual appearance and less susceptibility to stress.

The same benefits can be found in Prospect®, a liquid micronutrient for foliar application or for use in fertigation systems.

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<th>Treatment</th>
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Seeded on August 4, 2000 with G-2 creeping bentgrass at a rate of 2 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. Density measurements were based on % cover taken visually on 10/4 (8 weeks after treatment).

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