

SEED AVAILABILITY IN 1993

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Seed availability is determined by how much seed has been produced versus how much seed has been and is being used (consumption). 1993 is one of those years where last years' production was below average and consumption was above average. In other words, seed supplies are generally tight in 1993.

Seed is produced once a year during mid summer. The seed produced in any one summer has to last an entire year before a new crop comes on. In some years, such as 1990 and 1991, the harvest was well above normal and there was an oversupply of seed, and generally cheaper prices. However, following poor crop years, such as 1992, there was not enough seed to go around so prices increased significantly to balance supply and demand. In the winter-spring of 1993, we have the same type of situation, a shortage of seed and relatively higher prices.

However, seed shortages and surpluses seldom affect all the major turf species evenly. This is the case this year. Not all species are in short supply. The following is a summary of seed availability at this time for the major species:

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS: Last years crop (1992) was one of the poorest on record due to drought conditions. Plus the demand in 1992 was high. All bluegrasses are in short supply and prices are relatively high. This is a year just to be happy if you can get the varieties you want at any price.

PERENNIAL RYEGRASS: The 1992 crop was below average and demand was very high. Generally speaking, seed of the better varieties will be available but the prices will be higher than last year. Availability by late spring will be very limited but fall availability should be better.

FINE FESCUES: The fine fescues include Chewings, Hard, Creeping and Sheeps Fescue. Last years crop was well below average so availability of all fescue seed is somewhat limited. Hard fescues are very limited and expensive this year. Chewings fescues are a little more readily available than Hards, but are still very short supply and expensive. The Creeping Red Fescue supply is in better shape, but seed is still more expensive than normal. Sheep fescue (a minor item) is in short supply.

BENTGRASS: Although the 1992 crop was poor, there is enough carry over from the 1991 crop to accommodate the demand. Availability is good and prices are stable.

TALL FESCUE: Same story as bentgrass – a poor 1992 crop, but good carryover. Availability is good and prices are stable or up possibly a little.

AVAILABILITY NEXT YEAR: This depends on the 1993 crop to be harvested in July. It is too early to speculate what kind of seed crop we will have this summer.