

STOP: 3

Fine Fescue Improvement

A. Martin Petrovic, K. T. Payne, J. M. Vargas Jr.

The fine leafed fescues offer a potential turfgrass with lower nitrogen and water requirements than needed for Kentucky bluegrass. All currently available varieties are susceptible to leaf spot which may develop into melting out with destruction of the plant in lower Michigan.

Strains of red fescue have been isolated with resistance to this disease. These must be combined to develop cultivars and usually three or four are used. Preliminary plots were established in September 1976 to evaluate the parental mother plants for turf quality. Twenty-one of these plots may be seen in Area F 1a in comparison with Pennlawn.

A red fescue variety test including 10 red fescue cultivars is also in area F 1a.

Sheep fescue is even more drouth tolerant and lower in nitrogen requirement than red fescue. Two spreading and low growing types have been crossed and a preliminary test is underway to determine whether progenies will express these characteristics.