

Evaluation of Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivars for Fairways

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Creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis palustris* Huds.) is the desired turfgrass species for use on golf course fairways in Michigan and throughout the Midwest because of its fine leaf texture, high shoot density, and tolerance of low mowing heights. Unfortunately, creeping bentgrass is a high maintenance turfgrass that, compared to other turfgrass species like Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis* L.), requires additional inputs such as irrigation, fertilizer, disease control, and cultural management practices to reduce thatch. If it could withstand fairway heights of cut, Kentucky bluegrass would require fewer maintenance inputs than creeping bentgrass while still providing a quality surface for golf.

Recently, greater emphasis has been placed on breeding Kentucky bluegrass cultivars that withstand low mowing heights. The purpose of our experiment is to evaluate several of these low mow Kentucky bluegrass cultivars under fairway mowing heights that are typical of high and low maintenance golf courses in Michigan. In addition, creeping bentgrass was evaluated for comparison with Kentucky bluegrass.

The experiment was established at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center on June 8, 1998 and on the sixth fairway at Forest Akers East Golf Course on July, 28, 1998. The experiments were seeded late because three separate heavy rainfall events washed out each site in the early part of the growing season. Kentucky bluegrass was seeded at a rate of 3 lb/1000 ft². Creeping bentgrass was seeded at 2 lb/1000 ft². Once established, the cultivars will be mowed three times/week at 0.5 or 0.625 (5/8) inches. Cultivars will be evaluated for: rate of establishment, color, turf quality, shoot density, surface uniformity and color uniformity, root mass, recovery from divots, and disease susceptibility.

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Species	Cultivar	Sponsor
Kentucky Bluegrass	Abbey	The Scotts Co.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Arcadia	Royal Seeds/Jacklin Seed Co.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Ascot	The Scotts Co.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Cobalt	Turf Merchants
Kentucky Bluegrass	Coventry	The Scotts Co.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Fairfax	Royal Seeds/Jacklin Seed Co.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Liberator	Zajac Performance Seeds
Kentucky Bluegrass	Limousine	Roberts Seed Co./Pickseed West, Inc.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Midnight	Pure-Seed Testing, Inc.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Princeton 105	Loftis Seed, Inc.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Rambo	Jacklin Seed Co.
Kentucky Bluegrass	SR 2109	Seed Research of OR
Kentucky Bluegrass	Unique	Turf-Seed, Inc.
Kentucky Bluegrass	Wildwood	LESCO, Inc.
Creeping Bentgrass	Penncross	Standard Entry
Creeping Bentgrass	Princeville	LESCO, Inc.