

Evaluation of Turfgrass Varieties For Golf Course Greens and Fairways

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Two experiments are ongoing to compare turfgrass cultivars for lower mowing heights. The creeping bentgrass study was designed to look at six of newest or most widely used cultivars of creeping bentgrass in Michigan. The Kentucky bluegrass study evaluated 14 Kentucky bluegrass cultivars in comparison with 2 creeping bentgrass cultivars mowed at a fairway height of 0.5 inches.

CREEPING BENTGRASS STUDY

Six cultivars of creeping bentgrass were seeded in 1997 at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center and on the nursery at Crystal Downs Country Club in Frankfort, MI. The cultivars evaluated were Pennncross, L-93, G-2, Providence, A-4 and Putter. Once established, the turf was mowed at 0.120 inches and received 3.5 lbs N/1000 ft²/yr.

Preliminary results indicate that G-2 and A-4 possess superior turf quality under the maintenance conditions at both locations. Turf quality of Pennncross and Putter was most adversely affected by the low mowing height.

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS STUDY

A study was initiated in 1998 at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center and on Forest Akers East Golf Course, East Lansing. Plots were seeded with Liberator, Midnight, P-105, Rambo, Unique, Wildwood, SR 2109, Ascot, Arcadia, Fairfax, Cobalt, Limousine, Abbey, Coventry, Pennncross (creeping bentgrass), and Princeville (creeping bentgrass). Once established, the turf was mowed at 0.5 inches and received 5 lbs N/1000 ft²/yr. Turf quality, color, and divot recovery ratings were taken periodically throughout the experiment.

There were no significant differences among the Kentucky bluegrass cultivars with respect to rate of establishment and all of the Kentucky bluegrass cultivars were slower to establish than creeping bentgrass. Preliminary results indicate that Midnight, P-105, Rambo, Limousine, and Fairfax provide good turf quality under the lower mowing height. When selecting a Kentucky bluegrass cultivar for fairways, one should also consider the potential invasion of *Poa annua* into the fairway. In this case, lighter green cultivars (e.g., Fairfax and Limousine) would minimize the contrast from the lighter colored *Poa annua*.