

# Seeds and Grasses

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**N**EARLY every one of the State seed laws is a "true label law" which requires all grass seed sold, to be correctly labeled, and their purity and germination stated on the package or label.—(Date of germination test must be stated.)

In labeling grass seed mixtures, all varieties that are five percent or more (by weight) of the entire mixture, must be listed on the package or tag, as well as the purity and germination.

Reliable seed houses would label their grass seeds correctly regardless of seed laws, but neither seed house nor law can be held responsible for errors in planting or that occur when the labels are lost.

## Watch Your Labels

**A** GOLF course in Massachusetts seeded their greens with pure red top and the backs and sides of the greens with South German bent because the labels were lost and the greenkeeper probably thought that the cleaner and brighter colored seed was the bent, because bent costs more than red top, and therefore should be cleaner. Had the greenkeeper realized the difference between the two seeds the expensive error would not have been made.

Either one of two simple tricks will furnish a good indication as to whether a sample is bent or red top. (1) Weigh (or lift in your hands) samples of equal bulk. The heavier sample is quite sure to be red top. (2)

Breathe on the palms and backs of both hands and immediately thrust one hand into one sample and the other into the other sample. The hand having the greater amount of "seed" (chaff) has very likely been into the bag of bent.

Usually the South German bents having a high purity (90% or more) contain comparatively few velvet bent seeds. The small, light velvet bent seeds are blown out in the recleaning process.

## Large Seed—Coarse Grass

**W**ITH very few exceptions the larger the grass seed the coarser the grass. The coarser the grass the shorter its life in close clipped turf. This correlation in size and texture holds within the species.

Red top is the largest of the bent seeds and is the coarsest grass. Incidentally, red top may be considered the exception to prove the rule, for we all know that red top is short lived in golf turf.

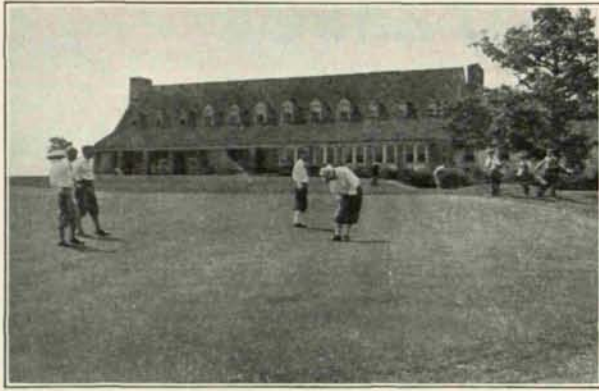
Sampling seed from the top of the bag, or from any other section of the bag is very likely to lead to an error, especially if the bag has been shaken. No sample should be taken until the seed has been thoroughly mixed.

Unless the comparative size and weight of grass seeds is fully realized a mixture such as Kentucky blue grass six parts, red top one part, parts by weight, is misunderstood. The true seed ratio of such a mixture is approximately three Kentucky blue grass and one red



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top and when purity and germination are considered the ratio becomes about 2.2 to 1. Cultural loss will further change the ratio to approximately 1.8 to .6.

By the same reasoning a mixture labeled 60% Chewings fescue, 25% red top and 15% South German bent, becomes approximately a 1-4-2 ratio.

Kentucky blue grass is sold as a certain grade of seed, for example 21 lbs., 24 lbs., 28 lbs., etc. This grade means that a measured bushel of Kentucky blue grass seed weighs 21 lbs.—24 lbs. or 28 lbs. The same Kentucky blue grass seed can be made to grade (or weigh) any weight from 19 lbs. to 27 lbs. inclusive by "fluffing" or "settling" as is needed.

Weight is not as essential in Kentucky blue grass seed as purity and germination and it usually works out that 24 lbs. grade is the best grade to plant.

### Compare Samples Carefully

**I**F several samples of seed have been submitted for comparison, care should be taken that the comparison is made on a fair basis. The samples will be marked with name of the firm submitting the sample and the purity and germination that is guaranteed, also a price quotation.

Comparison should first be made on a basis of the cost of a stated number of guaranteed viable seed. This comparison will usually eliminate one or two samples as being "over priced." Should there be several samples that were approximately equal in cost if viable seeds, the seeds should be carefully judged as to their purity. Equal volumes of each sample should be taken, and placed in a bottle or pan and given a number or letter.

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In judging seeds all firm names should be out of sight and not permitted to influence the decision. If equal volumes are taken, and all samples observed under similar conditions the true characteristics of the samples are easily noticed and a correct selection can be made.

#### Bent Seed Loses Purity In Handling

**P**URITY tests as well as germination tests will vary with the age of the seed, and purity will decrease with handling, especially with bents, as they shed their paleae and glumes.

Bent seed showing an 80% purity test on leaving the cleaners, might show slightly less than 70% pure by the time it reached the greenkeeper, and the increase in impurity would be due solely to the increased amount of chaff caused by handling.

From these remarks do not think that seed houses are all dishonest, crooked or even bent (though they do sell bent). They are not. Neither should a reputed reliable seed house be forever condemned if in some reason their seed failed to be "as good as usual."

Weather conditions at the time of harvesting that particular lot of seed might quite properly be blamed for the poorer quality, or perhaps some competitor "beat" the market and the reliable house was forced to take the inferior seed.



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