
JB COMMENTS:

The introduction and promotion of new turfgrass cultivars continues. You have the opportunity to choose from among many species and cultivars. Your choice(s) will be determined by a number of factors that must be prioritized as dictated by site-specific conditions. They include (a) climate temperature & rainfall distribution, (b) sun vs. shade, (c) soil - drainage, fertility, pH, salinity, and compaction proneness, (d) disease and insect severity by species, (e) type of use-ornamental vs sport, (f) intensity of use, and (g) cultural requirements.

Development of a new turfgrass cultivar should encompass research to characterize it relative to the above criteria. Unfortunately, too many new cultivars are being rushed to the market without adequate performance and adaptation assessments! The developer who releases a new cultivar prematurely, is generating information concerning its performance characteristics at the expense of the end-user, who may be the loser.

The performance assessments of a prospective new cultivar require a minimum of four years (after full turf establishment) in each individual location, with the evaluations being conducted in replicated plots (3 reps minimal) along with other cultivars of the same species that are currently in widespread, successful use. Five years is needed for the turfgrass ecosystem to evolve into a semi-stable state. Only then, may one make a reliable assessment of a cultivar's resistance or tolerance to environmental, soil, disease, and insect stresses.

Over the past 37 years of cultivar evaluations I have watched many entries that looked outstanding for 2 to 3 years that subsequently failed miserably in year 4 or 5!

Do you want to take a chance on an inadequately assessed cultivar, to essentially pay the assessment costs of a developer, and possibly experience a failure within 5 years?

JB VISITATIONS:

Malaysia-September

Presented a three-day lecture series on golf course turfgrass science and culture before attendees from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Hong Kong. It was an enthusiastic group with great eagerness to learn. Many questions!

While other parts of the world have slowed, the economic and golf booms continue in southeast Asia.

Night golf has arrived in southeast Asia. There are six lighted golf courses in Malaysia alone. These are 18-hole golf courses of full size and are of an international standard in design, that are lighted artificially throughout. Night play continues until 11:30 p.m. or even midnight. Night golf is very popular in these hot, humid countries, with golfers paying a premium for green fees.

A new horse race track facility was constructed in the Kuala Lumpur area, with planting of the turf track completed in late 1992. A sand root zone was used along with a vegetative bermudagrass (*Cynodon* spp.) planting. The surface is still not raceable after 1 full year of favorable growing conditions. It should be noted that they did not use the interlocking mesh matrix system.

Finally, on a newly constructed golf course in Malaysia I observed the use of buffelgrass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) on unmowed secondary rough areas. Its performance after two years in the Kuala Lumpur area is positive.

Italy - September

The trip involved visitations to Rome, Milan, and Turin. In Rome visited the Italian Golf Federation Turfgrass Technical School on the LeQuerce Golf Course near Nepi. This program continues a valuable function in the upgrading of playing conditions of Italian golf courses through the formal training of golf