Michigan Names Best Mixes For Roadside Grasses

The best way to establish grass along a roadside is to plant mixtures containing no less than 20% each of perennial ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass and red fescue.

"In our study, we also found that adding cereal rye was beneficial to the mixture for sandy sites," John Kaufmann, Michigan State University turfgrass researcher, told scientists at the annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy.

"But the addition of the cereal rye for clay-loam sites did more damage than good."

The ryegrass will help you get quick establishment on roadsides, however. Kaufmann explained that the cereal rye used in his study of roadside grass mixtures seemed to form a good surface climate for fescue on a sandy site by helping to hold moisture.

"After three growing seasons, the red fescue became the dominant grass on the sandy sites used in our tests."

"On the clay-loam sites, the Kentucky bluegrass became dominant after four seasons." Kaufmann, who conducted his research in conjunction with MSU turfgrass specialist David Martin, said the addition of tall fescue, redtop, creeping bentgrass, orchardgrass or bromegrass had no effect on improving grass establishment in any of the roadside sites tested in southern Michigan.

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, has cut leaf-raking time in half with a vacuum leaf collector that swoops up 14 square yards of leaves per load and grinds them to mulch. James Mayer, left, and Homer Pinkerton, physical plant workmen, operate the collector. The mulch, formerly burned, goes into a compost heap for campus use.