

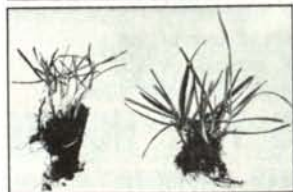
# A stellar new bluegrass — low-growing FLYKING

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ABOVE: Which is bluegrass, which is bentgrass? With both mowed at 1/2-inch it's hard to tell. That's 'Fylking' bluegrass under the hand. LEFT: Both are bluegrass. 'Fylking', left, has fine texture compared to the usual form; has twist or curl to leaves.

Kentucky bluegrass as a species is outstanding for lawns—elegant, hardy and widely adapted. No other turfgrass spreads so profusely by underground stems (called rhizomes), forming a soil-holding, weight-supporting sod second to none. No wonder that this once incidental grass from Europe has become one of the most important "agricultural" crops, near the top in economic importance for many states. As America suburbanized, bluegrass was ready for the move, its mettle tested by decades of natural selection in Kentucky and the Midwest.

Now a new stage in the evolution of fine turfgrass has come. Selections are sorted out from this hereditary pool of proven accomplishment, to yield varieties matching today's demand for luxuriousness and tailored performance. One such is 'Fylking,' widely tested as 0217.

'Fylking' has "arrived" opportunely. Today's standards do not permit much seasonal weakness, and some of the bluegrass elite are beginning to suffer from unpreventable disease. Stripe smut attacks widely used bluegrasses such as 'Windsor' and 'Merion' (though genetically diversified "old fashioned" natural Kentucky bluegrass suffers less, as do mixed populations such as 'Arboretum' or 'Park'). So far 'Fylking' has proved relatively unbothered by the incurable stripe smut.

Not only is 'Fylking' resistant to smut and most other diseases, but it is novel in another important respect. 'Fylking' can be mowed low, much lower than customary for a bluegrass, about as one might expect to keep Highland bentgrass. 'Fylking' or combinations of it with a fine fescue did well at half-inch mowing on the Lawn Institute grounds in Ohio. Dr. Funk of Rutgers University, however, suggests mowing at one inch to help grass vigor and weed control. This is still low enough to please those homeowners who "itch" to crop closely.

Individual plants of 'Fylking' don't look a whole lot different than other bluegrasses, except that the leaves are unusually fine-textured and quite arched (causing the sod somewhat to felt). Its delicate appearance much resembles fine fescue, suggesting that a bit of Chewings or Penn-lawn in a 'Fylking' seed blend should prove compatible as a nurse for new plantings. As with most bluegrasses, 'Fylking' is an excellent rhizomer, spreading into a sod that can be lifted in a matter of weeks. 'Fylking' also spreading into a sod that can be lifted in a matter of weeks. 'Fylking' also spreading into a sod that can be lifted in a matter of weeks. 'Fylking' also spreading into a sod that can be lifted in a matter of weeks. When 'Fylking' is mowed low, less than a half inch, the tillers grow near the ground much like bentgrass.

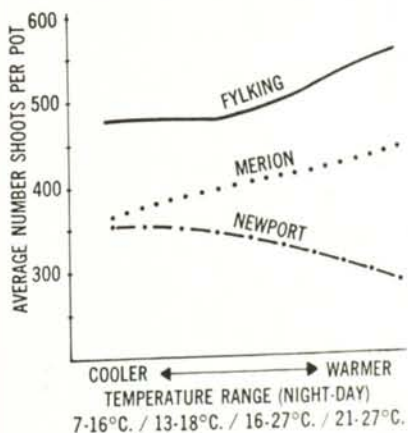
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## New Bluegrass

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'Fylking' will be licensed for sale this spring. Some seed was furnished sod growers last year, so that select sod can be purchased too, although both seed and sod will be scarce at first over much of the country. Indications are that 'Fylking' will become one of the premium sod grasses, joining 'Merion' as a "Cadillac" variety. So far 'Fylking' has shown no serious drawbacks during three years of testing at research centers throughout the country. Some new pathogen may eventually attack, but so far its disease-resistance seems promising.

The planting and care of 'Fylking' is much the same as for other bluegrasses. The variety is remarkably fast sprouting and quick to cover. Experience at the Lawn Institute indicates that after a rapid first few weeks, slow, consolidative growth sets in. Planting has been successful at all seasons; the newer techniques for irrigating, mulching and pre emergence control of crabgrass make even summer seedings more feasible than formerly. 'Fylking' is a moderately heavy feeder, and a lawn fertilizer rich in phosphorus is suggested for mixing into the seedbed. Once established, 'Fylking' should do well with three or four feedings annually, each to provide about a pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Because of its low growth 'Fylking' responds to reel as well as rotary mowing. 🌱



Growth chamber response of three Kentucky bluegrass varieties planted in pots. Note 'Fylking's' greater density, and response of it and 'Merion' to higher temperatures, as compared to 'Newport.' Research was by Dr. Victor Younger, U. of California, Riverside.