

THE MILLENNIUM NOT YET, BUT PROGRESS

Turfgrass breeders have been making up for the lost time in recent years. New varieties are constantly released, and are not confined to the favorite lawn species (Jacklin Seed, for example, has developed a new Canada bluegrass, Reubens; a new redtop, Streaker; and a low-maintenance bluegrass, Wabash). But progress with the most important lawn species - the Kentucky bluegrasses, the perennial ryegrasses and the fescues - give greatest cause for pride. Look how far Fylking and Glade Kentucky bluegrasses have come since they were foundlings first recognized a few years ago for superior performance in fine turf.

Fylking's history begins in Sweden, where it was first selected and quickly acclaimed for elegance. But it had to be honed to and proven for the vastly differing climates that make up continental America. The Fylking selection proved itself nationwide, and Fylking now has become one of the best recognized bluegrass varieties. It provides outstanding performance in all sections of the country. And Fylking displays a demeanor befitting its elegance, being quite compatible in mixtures rather than aggressively competitive. Of course, no variety is invariably a huge success, in all ways, at all locations. But some of the commendations that have come Fylking's way are worth noting. Among them are salinity tolerance and ozone tolerance in California, excellent quality in Illinois, good autumn color and fine appearance under low mowing in Idaho, resistance to leafspot, smut and rust in New York, exceptional decumbency in Pennsylvania. On the East Coast, Fylking has endured acid habitat well, and in western Canada the variety has proven companionable with bentgrasses. Fylking has done well beyond bluegrass' normal range, as in El Paso, Texas, on the Mexican border. The variety is less afflicted by smog than most bluegrasses, and is remarkable nonchlorotic on alkaline soils of Colorado.

In contrast, Glade bluegrass is an outstanding domestic "find". The variety has behaved excellently in the shade almost everywhere, largely because of its resistance to mildew. Like Fylking, Glade is decumbent and suited to fine turf. It makes its presence felt particularly as the season progresses. Glade is not severely stricken by disease. In Michigan, Glade is rated a top performer, in sun as well as moderate shade, showing great uniformity and good winter color. Even though not as acclaimed southward as is Fylking, Glade ratings in Kansas have been good. In Illinois and throughout the Midwest, Glade has consistently shown tolerance to familiar diseases, in a region where disease is the *bête noire* of fine turf. The variety endures the acidity of eastern soils well, and thrives with only moderate maintenance. In Pennsylvania, Glade's procumbency increased as mowing height was raised, unusual for a turfgrass! The varieties named are but the tip of the iceberg. Lawn making, everywhere, is bound to benefit from tremendous strides in variety breeding underway today. Many new selections from the Jacklin research centers, and from outstanding firms throughout the country, can be expected to join Fylking and Glade in helping America have attractive, more efficient lawns. The quality of seed can be expected to match the high standards set by Fylking and Glade, which are sold essentially pure and free from weeds, sprouting exceptionally well.

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David Wehner recently joined the faculty of the Department of Horticulture at the University of Illinois with duties in turfgrass research and testing. Dr. Wehner came to Illinois from the University of Maryland where he had similar duties. Dave received his B.S. degree in chemistry from the University of Notre Dame and his M.S. and Ph.D. in agronomy from Pennsylvania State University. His Ph.D. thesis dealt with heat tolerance of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. While at Maryland, he worked in the areas of pesticide screening, chemical retardation of Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue, and the effects of heat and drought stress on cool season turfgrasses. He also taught a course in turfgrass management. At Illinois, Dr. Wehner will be doing turfgrass research, teaching two courses in turfgrass management, and advising both graduate and undergraduate students.

Tom Fermanian has recently joined the faculty of the Department of Horticulture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to assume the leadership of the turfgrass extension program. Tom's academic career began at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater where he received a B.S. degree in Botany. Before entering graduate school, Tom studied two years at Oregon State University, working closely with a vegetable crops pathologist. During his stay in Oregon, Tom had the opportunity to work on a ryegrass seed farm for two years. Dr. Fermanian attained the degrees of M.S. and Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University. His Ph.D. thesis dealt with isolating toxins found in soil under bermuda-grass turf, affected by the disease Spring Dead Spot. In addition to his extension responsibilities, Dr. Fermanian will be conducting a research program in the areas of turfgrass weed control and nutrition and will advise graduate students.

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