

USGA Executive Committee Approves \$4.1 Million for Turfgrass Research

Far Hills, N.J. — The USGA Executive Committee, at its June 1991 meeting at Chaska, Minnesota, approved a 5-year, \$4.1 million extension of the USGA/GCSAA Turfgrass Research Program. The funding will support selected research projects for the period 1993 through 1997.



The appropriated funds will be used to conduct research projects in two principal categories: 1) Plant Improvement — including turfgrass breeding and biotechnology, and 2) Resource Management — including cultural practices, biotechnology and alternative pest management. A request for pre-proposals will be sent to university research personnel in August, 1991. Final decisions on projects funded will be made at the March 1992 meeting of the USGA Turfgrass Research Committee. An announcement of these selections will be made in April, 1992.

Among the objectives of the original 10-year Turfgrass Research Program, begun in 1982, was to significantly reduce water use and maintenance costs on golf courses by breeding new grasses and developing improved cultural maintenance practices. Two improved turfgrass varieties, NuMex 'Sahara' bermudagrass and 'NE 84-609' buffalograss, are now available for use on golf courses and other turf areas as a result of USGA funding. Much of the background work has been accomplished with the breeding programs sponsored by the USGA, and it is expected that many more varieties will be released during the next decade.

During the next 5-year phase of the program, emphasis will be placed on developing grasses and cultural maintenance practices that conserve our natural resources. New grasses will be sought that require less water, pesticides and fertilizer, and that exhibit other desirable characteristics, including:

- ability to survive high and low temperature extremes
- tolerance of non-potable water
- tolerance of alkaline, acid or saline soils
- reduced need for mowing and fertilization
- tolerance of intense traffic
- resistance to diseases, insects, nematodes and weed competition
- tolerance of smog and other pollutants
- shade tolerance

By extending the funding of the Turfgrass Research Program for a 5-year period, the USGA hopes to ensure continued high standards for the maintenance of golf courses while addressing environmental concerns about the protection and conservation of our natural resources.

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