

Fine fescues

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change."

Other factors are that "only in recent years have we had extremely good varieties, and fescues aren't going to give you that bright green color we associate with North American golf," Hurdzan added. "So there is that reluctance of a lot of superintendents because they don't know how their golfers are going to respond to turf that's not bright green."

Garrett Gill, a golf course architect based in River Falls,

Wis., said fescues mix well with bluegrass, adding, "They seem to [green up] relatively well before even the blues. So they help stabilize the soil in the roughs."

"The idea is that in the winter the roughs are going to be nice and green and the Bermuda will be dormant, so you get a distinct color band. In the summer, the fairways are a nice dark green, and the fescues look tawny — a nice way to say brown," he said.

Brilman agreed with the advantages and added some of her own.

"Sheep fescues are nice for the roughs because they provide color

definition. They are very blue and the fairway grasses are green, so you can define the edges of your fairways with them," she said.

"Some of them, such as chewings and slender creepers, can be used in milder climates. They'll take a short height of cut. In England, the Pacific Northwest and New England you can use them in combination with bentgrass on the fairways. Slender creepers look beautiful in the Pacific Northwest, but in Maryland they're dead."

Waterville (Maine) Country Club superintendent Kyle Evans reported good results mixing

fescues with ryegrass in some areas and with bentgrass in others.

"It grows great in the shade, in the rough. It's tough to get bluegrass to grow up here, so I've been mixing fescues and ryes with real good success," he said.

In the bentgrass-fescue mix, Evans said he has "no diseases to speak of," is "very happy with the color" and is pleased with its wear-tolerance in high-traffic areas and playability around the greens.

Barenbrug's Peters said: "It seems golf courses are more and more thinking, 'Instead of the generic fairway, tee and green,

let's go with wildflowers, or more native species or something that suits the golf course maintenance and budget purposes.'

"Also, fine fescues are lower-growing. So, for real rough areas they're not going to end up waist-deep."

THE LOW-MAINTENANCE PLUS

"Superintendents," said Brilman, "must keep nutrient levels down in maintaining fescue grasses. They are more susceptible to cold and damp diseases — moreso in the spring than the summer. They tend to do worse when fertilizer rates and irrigation are heavier. In more humid areas, people tend to over-manage fine fescues, and that encourages disease and insect problems.

"Fine fescues don't survive well in the transition zone and South, while tall fescues thrive in heat and humidity and are flexible regarding nitrogen and water use."

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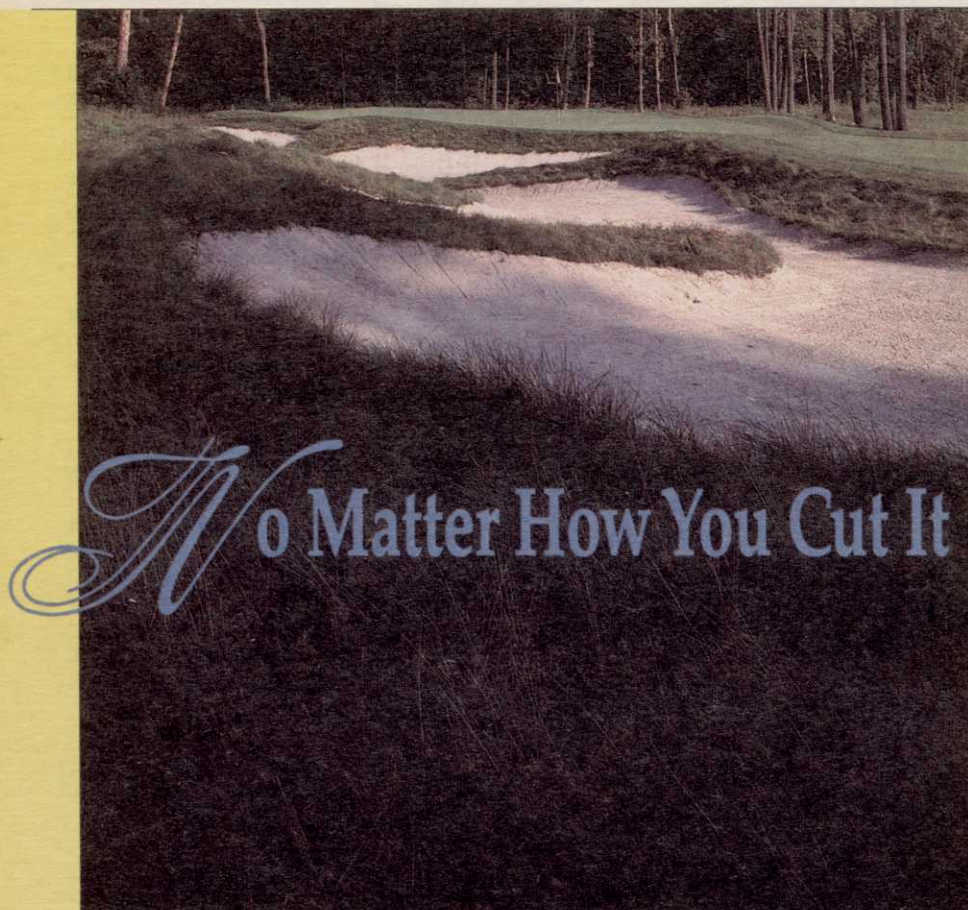
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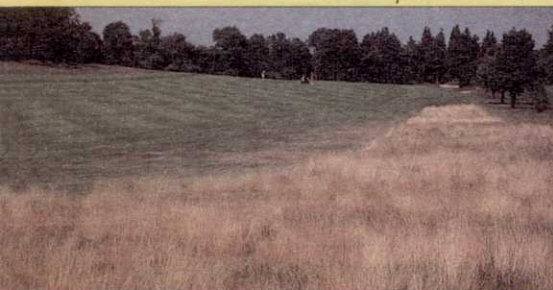
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