

Dr. Shearman updates status of buffalograss development

By PETER BLAIS

Dr. Robert Shearman has closely followed the work on buffalograss conducted by fellow University of Nebraska researcher Dr. Terry Riordan.

Following is Shearman's analysis of buffalograss' status as a golf course turf and its future.

"In 1984, Dr. Riordan and Dr. Ed Kinbacher initiated a turfgrass selection and breeding program to improve buffalograss for turfgrass use. Shortly after initiating the program, the USGA supplied grant support to improve buffalograsses for use on golf course turfs. Buffalograss is one of the few turfgrasses that is native to North America. Its characteristics fit some of the primary goals of the USGA Research Program, which were to develop grasses that would require less water and other inputs for course use.

"The buffalograss breeding project has been highly successful. To date, our vegetative cultivars and two-seeded cultivars have been released. The program has also demonstrated that there is a great deal more genetic diversity in buffalograss than was first thought.

"To date, the buffalograsses developed by Dr. Riordan have primarily found their way into home lawn use. We are in the early generations of buffalograss development for turfgrass use and our knowledge of its management requirements are limited.

"The vegetative cultivars are planted from sod or plugs. They have found limited use on golf course roughs, primarily due to

their limited availability, relatively high establishment costs and a general hesitancy to try something new. However, there are courses in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa and Nebraska that are using buffalograss in their roughs.

"The seeded cultivars are just reaching the marketplace. I really feel the seeded cultivars will receive more use on courses than the vegetative types, because of their greater ease in handling and somewhat lower establish-

ment costs.

"It's probably good the new buffalograsses haven't been widely used. We still have a lot to learn about their adaptation and use.

"Buffalograsses will definitely play a role in areas of adaptation, where water conservation is an issue. We are really looking at the tip of the iceberg in terms of current buffalograss development for turf use. Current buffalograsses can be compared to the development in perennial

ryegrass or turf-type tall fescues. For years, Linn perennial ryegrass and Kentucky-3 tall fescue were the standards for these species. In three to four generations of cultivar improvement in both perennial ryegrass and tall fescue, we have evolved to high quality turf types that have little resemblance to the original standards (i.e. Linn and Kentucky 31.).

"I think of Texoka as the standard for buffalograss and we have already passed it with the

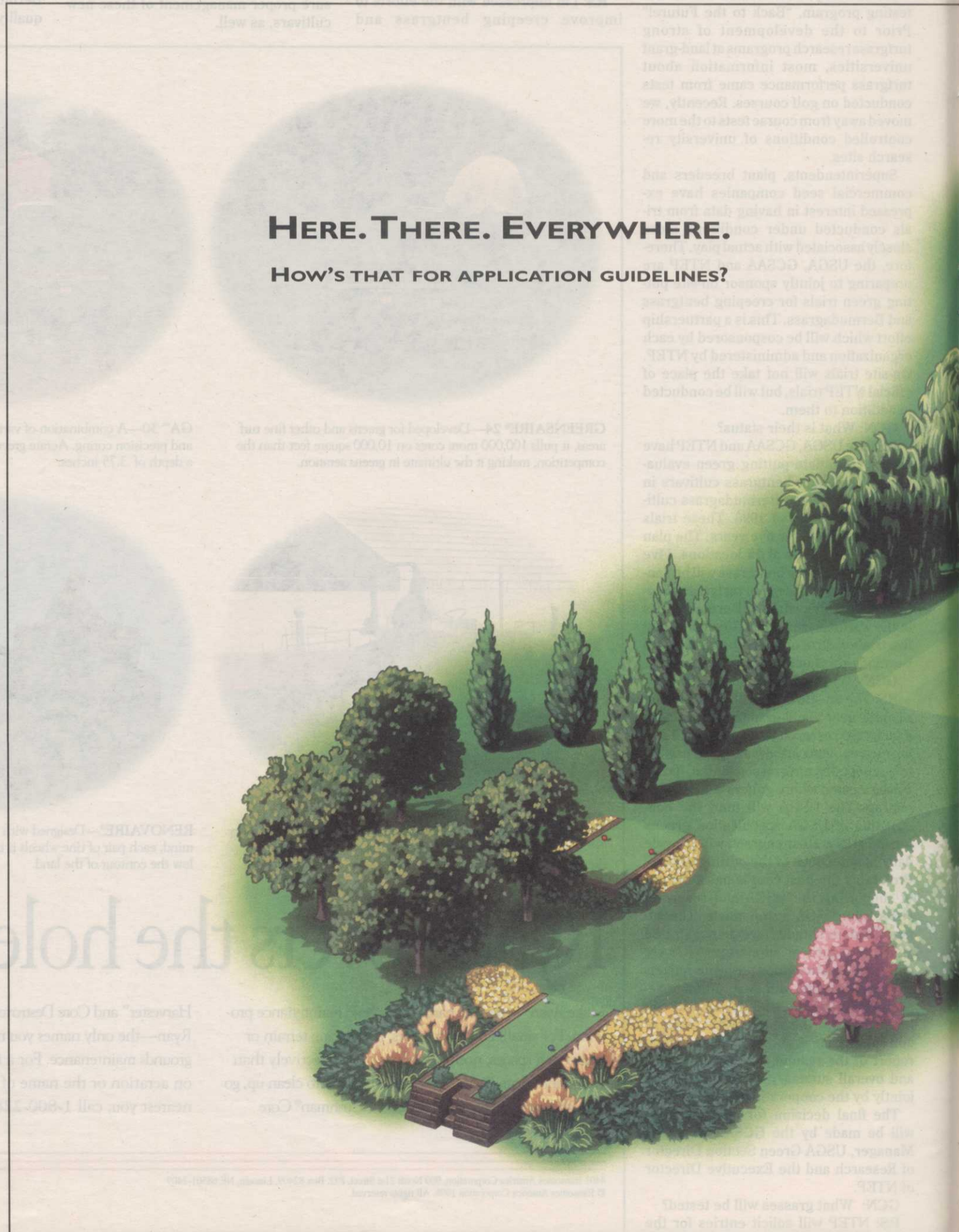
quality of the cultivars coming from the early generations of this improvement effort. I know that there is considerable genetic variability within buffalograss as a species. I'm confident that we will see continued improvement with future cultivar releases. Dr. Riordan is already putting considerable effort into developing cultivars for golf course tee, fairway and rough use. There are others in industry and at other institutions who will be releasing improved material as well."

Monty Moncrief Scholarships are awarded to six

MARIETTA, Ga. — Two students from the University of Georgia and four students from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College have been named recipients of Monty Moncrief Memorial Scholarships.

The Scholarships are sponsored by the Georgia State Golf Foundation with assistance from the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Selected from the University of Georgia were Chad Childs of Cairo, Ga., an agronomy-turfgrass management major; and Phil Petit of Woodbine, Ga., a turfgrass management major. Selected from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College are Clay Kolbie of Pelham, Ga., a golf turf management major; Gene Mullis of Berlin, Ga., a golf turf management major; Micky Eubanks of Milledgeville, Ga., a golf turf management major; and Tripp Turley of Montezuma, Ga., a turfgrass science major.



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