

The search is on for improved Bermudagrass varieties

By MARK LESLIE

FAR HILLS, N.J. — Whether it be finding the origins of off-types of hybrid varieties, or searching out cultivars that resist nematodes and spring dead spot or tolerate the cold, scientists across the South are investigating Bermudagrass and how to improve it.

Several research projects are among those being funded by the U.S. Golf Association Green Section, and reports on their progress will soon be released. They include:

- At Oklahoma State University, Dr. Michael P. Anderson in 1998 began a \$125,000 five-year study to increase re-

sistance in Bermudagrass turf varieties to spring dead spot through gene transformation technology.

"The use of high-velocity micro-projectiles (biolistics) to deliver recombinant DNA into intact plant cells has been successfully utilized to transform many grass species, and is considered the method of choice for most grass species," according to Anderson.

His experiments will identify, sequence and characterize a protein that has been discovered to be strongly and persistently inhibitory to-

ward the bacteria that causes spring dead spot, Anderson said.

- At Texas A&M University, Dr. Richard H. White is in the midst of a three-year study on best management practices for new dwarf Bermudagrasses.

"New dwarf Bermudagrasses are, in general, more aggressive thatch producers than Tifdwarf," White reported. "Judicious nitrogen fertilization will be required to slow the rate of thatch accumulation for many of the new Bermudagrass cultivars. Nitrogen amounts greater than 10 pounds

annually per 1,000 square feet improved turf quality but contributed to increased thatch, decreased ball-roll distance, and did not substantially increase shoot density."

White reported no differences in thatch accumulation among light (frequent) and severe (infrequent) vertical mowing and top-dressing regimes. However, he said, severe, infrequent vertical mowing reduced turf quality for long periods.

Meanwhile, White reported several new dwarf Bermudagrasses provided superior quality to Tifdwarf when mowed at 0.125

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Jim Snow

New Bermudagrass varieties in the golf course marketplace

SunDevil II

Medalist America Turfgrass Seed introduces SunDevil II seeded Bermudagrass that offers improved cold weather tolerance and disease resistance and requires less irrigation and maintenance. SunDevil II also greens up earlier in the spring and goes dormant later in the fall than common Bermudagrass.

The new turf is also ideal for overseeding existing common Bermudagrass and is a solution to areas of winter kill and turf disease.

For more information contact Medalist America: 1-800-568-TURF.

Southern Star

Jacklin Seed introduces Souther Star seeded Bermudagrass which offers improved quality, density, texture, greenup and seed yield than previous seeded varieties. The new turf establishes itself rapidly and is a comperable replacement for vegetative Bermudagrasses. Southern Star will be available following the 1999 harvest.

For more information contact Jacklin

Seed: 208-773-7581

PRIMO Bermudagrass Blend

Seed Research of Oregon announces improvements for 1999 on its certified PRIMO Bermudagrass blend. A Seed Research Advanced Seed Coat, an organic soil amendment agent, has been added to the seed surface. The certified blend of two or three different Bermudagrass varieties ensures that the seed will better handle varying soil and growing conditions.

OKS95-1 Bermudagrass

This experimental seeded Bermuda-

grass variety has been developed by Dr. Charles Taliaferro of Oklahoma State University and has been tested in the current NTEP Bermudagrass test. Seed Research of Oregon and Johnstons Seed of Enid, Okla. are presently working with Dr. Taliaferro on commercial seed production tests and expect to release the variety in the very near future.

OKS95-1 is noted for its winter hardiness and will be of good use for those in the upper transition zone who lose their Bermudagrass in cold years.

For more information contact Seed Research of Oregon: 800-253-5766

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