

HOT WEATHER

Creeping Red Fescue

Recently isolated strains of creeping red fescue which retain live green coloring despite drought and heat are being marketed by F. H. Woodruff & Sons, Inc., Milford, Conn.

For years considerable work has been done with fescue for warm, dry summers because this variety is hardy, particularly in northern latitudes. A solution for southern and semi-southern regions, in locations where ample water is available for the planting year, has been found in Flawn, also introduced by Woodruff. But Flawn is not suitable for latitudes with extremely severe winters. In such regions fescue has proved the most enduring variety. Fescue not only is a northern grass, but it grows on relatively poor soils, requires little moisture, stands up under traffic and withstands considerable heat.

The chief drawback to the strains of fescue hitherto available, however, has been their characteristic of turning a dull grey-green during hot, dry weather. The grass survives but loses its beauty. Although Chewings fescue is recognized as one of the mainstays of northern lawns, the work of isolating superior strains has continued steadily. Considerable progress has been made with the numerous strains of creeping red fescue.

Many of the so-called creeping reds are not truly creeping, but grow similar to Chewings. One of these is the Old strain, which originated in Canada. The isolation of this strain is a good illustration of the painstaking labor required in isolating grasses. After plants are selected and their seed propagated, and the new plants re-selected season after season, until permanent characteristics can finally be depended upon, the new strain will be found to have gained advantages at the cost of sacrificing desirable characteristics of the older strains. Olds is typical of such a strain, having received



Harvesting a stand of Illahee. Note: the size to which the base of the rows has grown because Illahee is a true creeping type of red fescue.

certification as an independent strain, but its attainments have been at the expense of putting up with a coarse, flat leaf, and of losing the runners.

So the search started anew for a creeping red with rhizomes, and with typical narrow, round fescue leaf, yet a plant that would stay green in hot, dry weather. Such a true creeping red has now been isolated by the Northwest District of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It is called Illahee, the Indian name for Paradise. It is the only creeping red certified as to strain.

The seed of Illahee, the true certified color-holding creeping red fescue with round leaves, is being offered commercially by Woodruff. This seed is obtained from plants grown in rows two feet apart, with the space between the rows cultivated to keep out weeds. By this method it is possible to offer seed certified a minimum of 99 percent pure, and 95 percent germination.

Notwithstanding the advantages attained with Illahee, the task of isolating other fine strains continues. Among the newer types not available commercially, but showing promise, are Ranier and an unnamed strain now simply designated as .0675. More information will be available about these strains next year, when F. H. Woodruff & Sons, Inc., put them on display in their several trial grounds.

Young plants of Illahee, the Creeping Red Fescue Grass. Note: the land is cultivated between the rows.



The same stand of Illahee grown to maturity. Note: That there is no other vegetation between the rows.

