



# THE EXTENSION LINE

By Bob Mugaas  
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Mary Hockenberry Meyer has been conducting extensive evaluations and research on many ornamental grasses at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Following is a brief summary of ornamental grasses which have performed well in part or all of Minnesota.

**Perennials:**

- Calamagrostis acutiflora* 'Stricta' . . . . . Feather Reed Grass
- Deschampsia caespitosa* . . . . . Tufted Hair Grass
- Festuca cinerea* 'Sea Urchin' or 'Soiling' . . . . . Blue Fescue
- Helictotrichon sempervirens* . . . . . Blue Oat Grass
- Miscanthus sinensis* 'Purpurescens' . . . . . Red Miscanthus  
or Flame Grass
- Miscanthus sinensis* 'Silver Feather' . . . . . Silver Feather  
Miscanthus
- Molinea caerulea arundinacea* 'Windspell' . . . . . Moor Grass
- Panicum virgatum* 'Rubrum' or 'Strictum' . . . . . Switch Grass
- Sesleria autumnalis* or *S. caerulea* . . . . . Sesleria
- Spodiopogon sibericus* . . . . . Spodiopogon

**Additional for Southern Minnesota:**

- Erianthus ravennae* . . . . . Plume Grass
- Pennisetum alopecuroides* . . . . . Fountain Grass

**Two Excellent Choices for Annual Bedding Plants:**

- Pennisetum setaceum* . . . . . Crimson Fountain Grass
- Pennisetum villosum* . . . . . Feather Top

**Tips to Use Ornamental Grasses:**

- Plant grasses in PUBLIC AREAS to show their mature appearance; in front of your business, etc. with other shrubs and/or bedding plants.
- Think of grasses just as you would other perennials (e.g. peonies, daylilies, iris, etc.) as far as use and care.

## Toxic Chemical Task Force Meets in St. Paul

As part of a broadening interest nationally into the use of pesticides and fertilizers, the City of St. Paul organized a citizen's task force last November with the intent of developing ordinances to protect citizens from overuse and abuse of these substances.

Though the issue arose over possible surface water and groundwater contamination by these chemicals, the investigation soon broadened to include possible hazardous exposure to homeowners and applicators throughout the city.

The emphasis of the investigation centered on the use of "organic," natural approaches to plant management versus

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**Wilbur-Ellis**

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## Chemical Task Force—

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unnatural, inorganic materials as applied to target areas in the past.

**Golf courses did not escape their close scrutiny.**

After being alerted to the potential problems golf courses could face in St. Paul by the Minnesota Plant Food & Chemical Association, the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association chose to take an active stance in developing this legislation.

**MGCSA sponsored speakers** and submitted written testimony in support of the position that golf courses contributed very little to environmental degradation, and that golf course superintendents, in particular, were carefully trained protectors of the environment.

Offering verbal testimony in MGCSA's behalf were Tom Fischer, Edinburgh USA; Jim Cink, Iowa State; Bob Mugaas, Hennepin County Extension Service, and Dr. Don White, University of Minnesota.

Written testimony from GCSAA and Penn State University supplemented the association's position. Lobbying was also done with other interested organizations and businesses in concert with MGCSA's stance.

Though the final report is not finished, it appears that golf courses in Minnesota have escaped most of the criticism forwarded towards pesticide and chemical use nationally.

Nonetheless, we must realize that our image as positive influences on the environment has become tarnished. We must respond positively to the concerns of environmentally conscious citizens and become leaders in the environmental effort.

**MGCSA is assuming a greater leadership role** in this area. It is your responsibility as golf course superintendents to make sure that pesticides and fertilizers are used safely and properly on your course.—*Greg Hubbard*

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