

FESCUE UPDATE

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Appreciation is expressed to Clarence Wolfrom and Bill Milne, who, with Ward Cornwell provided the support which gave turfgrass research, teaching and extension programs at Michigan State University a new vitality and thrust in 1960. At our 50th Turfgrass Conference it is appropriate that we recognize the good work done by Dr. James Tyson of the Department of Soil Science, and these men who were loyal friends.

The development, with Dr. Joe Vargas, of combinations of leaf spot resistant parental plants of Festuca rubra to form synthetic cultivars was accomplished for the second year in 1979. In 1978 the first synthetics were made in cooperation with Dr. Bill Meyer at Hubbard, Oregon. Seedlings from these synthetics were evaluated for leaf spot reaction in the greenhouse during the winter of 1978-79 and were highly resistant, thus confirming high heritability for the character as long as all parents are resistant. To test the inheritance pattern of leaf spot resistance, crosses were made between susceptible and resistant parent plants. Preliminary readings show all progenies to be susceptible which adds credence to the recessive resistance theory. It appears that resistance is a recessive character, and that it is conditioned by more than a single gene.

Attempts to increase the synthetic crosses made in 1978 failed in Oregon due to poor weather conditions.

An additional three combinations were intercrossed in isolation in 1979, and increases are again being attempted.

Application has been submitted for plant protection of the cultivar Beaumont meadow fescue. Loft's Pedigreed Seeds, Inc. and Burlingham's are cooperating in the increase and distribution of this cultivar. Nearly 100 acres has been planted for certified seed increase in Oregon.

Good yields of Foundation seed of Wintergreen chewings fescue have been obtained for two years now by Northrup King and Company.