

# Seeds For Golf Courses

An expert's analysis of grass seeds which produce fine golf course turf. Origin and characteristics of the several varieties most generally sold by seed merchants

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## *Agrostis Vulgaris* —(Rhode Island Bent)

**B**OTANISTS do not agree as to the Latin name of that species which we commonly call Rhode Island Bent Grass; hence we have had some misunderstanding and confusion, not only as to the plant, but also as to the seed. It has been only through the combined work of Professors Hitchcock and Hillman that we now identify with certainty the plant as well as the seed.

This species is known by many different common names. To us in America it is Rhode Island Bent. To the people in New Zealand it is Brown-top or Colonial Bent, to those on Prince Edward Island, Canada, it is Fog, and to many Europeans it is Fiorin. Agriculturally, as well as commercially it ranks second to Redtop. Like the other species of *Agrostis* it thrives best on acid soil.

The principal seed producing areas are: South

seed is a mixture of several different species, yet it must be discussed here because at least 75% of the pure seed in all these mixtures is *Agrostis vulgaris*. The other Bents found in seed from South Germany are, Velvet Bent, Creeping Bent, and Carpet Bent. These species will be discussed in a later article.

The common commercial grade of South German Mixed Bent tests about 70% pure. The balance (30%) is usually harmless chaff. It has only been in late years that any attempt has been made to recondition it before leaving Germany. So now we have two other grades, one testing approximately 80% and the other (best grade) testing approximately 90%.

It is very easy to establish the origin of seed from this area, not only because it contains seeds of other bents, but because of the weed seed content. The origin of other bents is also determined in this way.

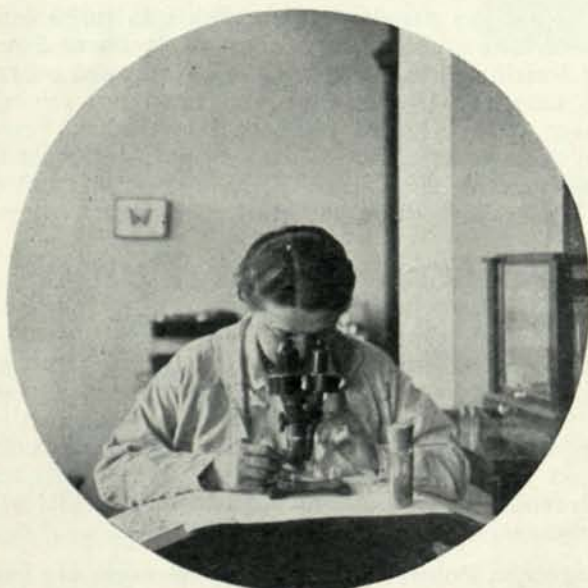
Bent of this origin is generally preferred to that of other origins, at least in the Eastern section of the United States, because it has a slightly finer leaf and is supposed to be more resistant to brownpatch. This seed is not quite as attractive in appearance as that from other sources.

## New Zealand Supplies Bent Seed

**T**HE next important source of supply is New Zealand. Most of the seed from this area is better cleaned than that from South Germany, and therefore, has a better appearance. There are lots that run as high as 98% pure seed, occasionally, however, it runs with a very heavy weed seed content. During the last year we have had some seed from this source that ran as high as five per cent mouse ear chickweed. Such seed even though 85% to 90% pure should not be used by any golf course. In a case of this kind buying on a technical purity and germination does not protect the club. It is better to have 70% pure with a weed content of less than 1% than to have 90% pure with a weed content of 5%.

There are no import restrictions or requirements for bent grasses, thus any kind of seed is permitted entry here. It is hoped that some day soon Congress will amend the Federal Seed Act so as to include the bents as well as the fescue and other fancy grasses.

The writer is told by many New Zealand exporters, that seed from the North Island is not adaptable to our conditions, and is a much coarser plant than that produced from seed from the South Island.



*The Author in Her Laboratory*

Germany, New Zealand, Prince Edward Island, Canada, Rhode Island (only a very small area), Oregon and Washington.

The wholesale price during the last ten years has fluctuated greatly. During this period it has sold as high as \$1.00 per pound, and as low as 35 cents per pound. At the present time it is selling at almost its low point.

## South German Mixed Bent

The principal source of supply is South Germany, and seed from this section is now sold under its correct common name of South German Mixed Bent. While this