

TURFAX™

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JB COMMENTS

Enhancing the Image of Turfgrass Professionals


One of the key characteristics of a profession is a body of technical terms that are unique to the profession or specialty area. Turfgrass science-culture certainly has a unique group of words or terms that distinguishes this profession. Effective communication among turfgrass professionals relies on an understanding of and proper use of turfgrass terminology that has evolved. Many of the terms now in common use have been developed during the past four decades in concert with the emergence of turfgrass science. **Appropriate use of these terms by professional practitioners also enhances the perception of others as to the level of unique expertise of the turfgrass manager.**

Unfortunately, all too many professional turfgrass practitioners have shied away from the use of technical terms and scientific names. Those individuals should observe the approach used by doctors and lawyers. They have a unique set of terms in their medical and legal documents which they use freely and which readily distinguishes them from other professions. Turfgrass professionals can effectively use this approach as well. It should be recognized, however, when communicating key budgetary needs or turf cultural approaches, that certain terms need to be defined for the audience during oral presentations and written reports. I should note that **the scientific names of the turfgrass species and many pests are widely used by turfgrass practitioners in other countries throughout the world. Only in the English-speaking countries are common names widely used rather than the scientific names.** In your next report how about using terminology such as: "Creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) growth on the putting greens has been slowed by the hot summer temperatures, especially in the soil"? 

ASK DR. BEARD

Q *Should blending of bentgrass cultivars be considered for putting greens?*

A The principle benefit of blending 2 to 4 cultivars of an individual turfgrass species is to provide a greater diversity in tolerances (a) to environmental stresses and (b) especially to diseases of turfgrasses. However, the broad use of this strategy for a wide range of creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) cultivars on closely mowed putting greens has not been adequately evaluated and proven through long-term research.

An important quality criterion on putting greens is a uniform canopy in terms of color, leaf width, growth habit, growth rate, and shoot density. Thus, **for blending to be successful, it is critical that there will be minimal to no segregation into genotypes that form patches varying in shoot density, growth habit, thatching, and even color.** Also, for a bentgrass blend used on greens to be successful, the cultivars need to be comparable in aggressiveness of growth, and no one cultivar should have substantial susceptibility to a disease or insect problem, in order to avoid a significant shift in the overall population to one genotype, thereby negating the beneficial goals of blending. Because of these concerns, **it is critical for any creeping bentgrass blend being considered for putting greens to have available positive research data under comparable environmental/soil conditions for a minimum duration of five years.** Unfortunately, most research on bentgrasses for putting greens is conducted with monostands of a single cultivar. 

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