

SCS Announces Specialty 'Conservation Grasses'

Commercial nurseries will be getting several more grasses from USDA's Soil Conservation Service this year, reports Wilmer Steiner.

Steiner supervises the work of 20 SCS Plant Materials Centers around the country.

Grasses recently released include Barton Western wheatgrass, a disease-resistant, superior forage producer for areas of the Great Plains, and "Tegmar" intermediate wheatgrass, a dwarf-type grass for the far western states. Tegmar produces tight sod, is drought-tolerant, and is good for stabilizing roadsides or other areas highly prone to erosion that need low, slow-growing ground cover.

This year, says Steiner, SCS hopes to release several more grasses to commercial nurseries through local soil conservation districts or state crop improvement associations. Among them:

● **DEERTONGUE**, a perennial panicgrass that stabilizes and beautifies strip mine spoil areas, steep ditches and highway cuts and fills. It has coarse, broad leaves, great seedling vigor, a height of 2½-3 feet and high tolerance for acid soils. It was developed at the Big Flats, N.Y., Center, in cooperation with Pennsylvania State University.

● **"CAPE" AMERICAN BEACHGRASS**, for use on East Coast beaches and sand dune areas from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Selected at the Cape May, N.J. Center, in cooperation with Rutgers University, it has proved more vigorous than other types of beachgrass tested.

● **MAIDENCANE**, a tough, water-loving native perennial of the Southeastern U.S. for use on the banks of drainage ditches and manmade lakes. Maidencane reduces scouring and wave action damage and is a good forage grass for wet, marshy areas. The major work on improving hardiness and adaptability is being done at the Coffeenville, Miss., and Brooksville, Fla., centers.

Charcoal Need Not Hinder Crabgrass Herbicides

An agronomist who three years ago found a way to reduce the harmful side effects of herbicides by using activated charcoal has since found that charcoal need not diminish the effectiveness of herbicides later applied for crabgrass control.

John A. Jagschitz, professor of

plant and soil science at the University of Rhode Island, reported his findings at the Northeastern Weed Science Society.

In 1968, he had published a study on how charcoal could be used to deactivate herbicide residues in turfgrass seedbeds.

According to his most recent study, although greater amounts of charcoal applied to turf caused greater reductions in the effectiveness of herbicides subsequently applied, by increasing the amounts of herbicides, the retarding effect of the charcoal was counteracted.

Effectiveness of standard rates of three herbicides—Betasan, Dacthal and Tupersan—was reduced when they were applied to turfgrass treated five months earlier with 100 pounds of charcoal for each acre. But charcoal applications made 17 months before the herbicide treatment were far less inhibiting than those made five months before, he said. There was no reduction in the effectiveness of three other herbicides—Bandane, Planavin, and tricalcium arsenate—by the previously applied charcoal, according to the study.



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