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44 WEEDS TREES & TURF/AUGUST 1977

ARS releases findings from Beltsville Center

Bermudagrass mutagens

Mutagenic breeding techniques applied to bermudagrasses have resulted in 120 new mutagens. These are undergoing tests for winter hardiness, differential phytotoxicity to herbicides, differential mineral soil responses and other tests of turf quality and propagation characteristics.

Bluegrass hybrids

Three Kentucky bluegrass hybrids, selected for seed increase after second year test data, are being tested further. Open-pollinated progeny of 230 fineleaf fescues and 190 tall fescues are being evaluated under turf management conditions.

Chinch bugs

Methods for rearing and storing chinch bugs in the laboratory for evaluating turfgrasses for resistance have been developed. Preliminary tests are being conducted with several Kentucky bluegrass cultivars to determine the most efficient and reliable screening procedures. So far, these tests have shown that a large reduction in top growth occurs before other visible symptoms of injury appear.

Crabgrass control

Plots established in a 10-year old turf in 1974 were premergently treated three successive years for crabgrass control. The turf was mainly red fescue with a little Kentucky bluegrass. Seven herbicidal treatments controlled crabgrass adequately. These included benefin, bensulide, butralin, DCPA, profluralin, and prosulfalin. Stands of turfgrasses appeared to be somewhat thinner and/or slight discoloration was noted in some years within a month after treatment with bensulide, butralin, and profluralin. The proportion of Kentucky bluegrass by September of the third year increased from 3 percent in the check plots to 30 to 45 percent in plots treated with benefin, butralin, DCPA, and profluralin.

A trend toward increases of Kentucky bluegrass in other treatments was observed, but was not statistically significant.

Winter hardiness

Arizona common, Tufcote, Tifgreen, and Midiron bermudagrasses are being evaluated to determine winterhardiness and turf quality as related to two potash levels and three nitrogen rates and sources. Treatments consist of 3, 6 and 9 lb. N/M applied as NH_4NO_3 (1 lb. N/M May-June-July, and 1 or 1 1/2 lb. N/M each month from May to October) or 9 lb. N/M as UF or IBDU in May. Muriate of potash is added according to soil test results to maintain a high (140-160 lb. K_2O/A) and a low (60-80 lb. K_2O/A) potassium level. Potassium applications are made in late summer when night temperatures became cooler but before the first frost.

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