

The Turfgrass Seed Market

What was once a relatively simple task of selecting turfgrasses for a particular site is now a skill requiring a degree of expertise by turf managers.

As recently as the 1960s, the choices were limited to a few improved public varieties for each type (genus) of turfgrass. Merion Kentucky bluegrass, released in 1950, proved there was an interest in improved (and more expensive) turfgrasses.

Today this interest has developed into an industry valued in excess of \$400 million and a multitude of improved turfgrasses. The monostand is gone. Quite often a fairway, lawn, or athletic field will be seeded with a mixture of three bluegrasses, two or three fine fescues, and two or three perennial ryegrasses. Turf managers consequently need an expanded basic knowledge of turf seed.

This knowledge should include a history of turfgrass improvement, the advantages of certain turfgrasses, the technology of seed production, and trends in variety development. Such information can provide the logic required to make a wise selection for a particular site.

The total of this information would stress anyone's memory, but portions of it can be memorized if the desire is present. To create the desire, one needs only to realize the historical richness of the story. The remainder of the information can be as close as this magazine for reference.

For these reasons, we offer this profile of the turf seed market. We hope it results in a new perspective of improved varieties and the recognition of the effort, dedication, and cooperation of those who developed them.

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