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is a proud member of these green industry professional organizations:

ALCA

Associated Landscape Contractors of America, 12200 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 150, Reston, VA 22091; (703) 620-6363.

American Sod Producers Association, 1855-A Hicks Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; (708) 705-9898.

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, KS 66049-3859; (913) 841-2240.

International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box 908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

International Turfgrass Society, Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0403; (703) 231-9796.

National Arborist Association, The Meeting Place Mall, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031-1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S. Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-6006.

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.

PGMS

Professional Grounds Management Society, 10402 Ridgland Rd., Suite 4, Cockeysville, MD 21030; (301) 667-1833.



Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, 1155 15th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 296-6085.

Sports Turf/Managers Association

Sports Turf Managers Association, P.O. Box 98056, Las Vegas, NV 89193-8056; (702) 739-8052.

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, 8500 Normandale Lake Blvd., Suite 1200, Bloomington, MN 55437; (612) 831-8515.

AS WE SEE IT

TERRY McIVER, MANAGING EDITOR



Developing and promoting turfseed brands cuts costs

The latest National Turfgrass Evaluation Program examined some 72 varieties of bluegrass, 65 perennial ryegrasses, 93 fine fescues and 65 tall fescues.

But you, the buyer, might only need one of each.

Confused? You're not alone.

Even some within the seed industry think the great number of varieties makes it hard for the buyer to choose.

Sandra Winton of Zajac Performance Seeds wrote *LM* following publication of our annual Seed Pocket Guide in July.

"The proliferation of turfgrass varieties, and the multitude of data collected on those varieties has made the job of turf professionals progressively more difficult and confusing," she wrote. "Many varieties that were statistically indistinguishable from the No. 1 rated were never [even] mentioned in the guide."

In addition, Tom Stanley, director of marketing for Turf-Seed, reports some astronomical figures for brand promotion costs.

"Also, varieties have a short life span," says Stanley. "Too many varieties are causing confusion in the marketplace, and not many are significantly different.

"We all want to be listed on the first page of the turf trial reports," admits Stanley, "but what about the varieties on the second and third page? Are they significantly different? Most probably are not."

According to Stanley, Turf-Seed has decided to counter some of the confusion by promoting brands. "By promoting brands," says Stanley, we can take the disadvantages of promoting varieties and turn them into advantages." He also believes brands are "easily upgraded by using new breeding material that's coming through our research program, and it's easy to maintain exclusivity."

The University of Illinois' Dr. Hank Wilkinson, speaking at the Jacklin Discovery Tour, explained that more and

more seed companies are expanding their research to accelerate seed development, and to fill the growing void left by shrinking university research programs.

But research is costly and in some cases a hit-and-miss proposition, even for the most established company.

"You can do a lot of research and get nowhere," admits Wilkinson. "For me to generate one piece of new information can cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000," says Wilkinson. He described a figure as seemingly high as \$1 million as "a drop in the bucket" when considering the total capital needed to finance research. And even then, most investments don't see solid results for 10 to 20 years, even longer for disease research.

"Industry's going to have to pick up more of this role and cooperate with universities," said Wilkinson, "and you're going to see more people hired in at the private level to do this work."

If it doesn't necessarily develop new varieties, seed research can still, as Stanley suggests, improve within a brand itself. "Better quality, better traits, resistance, hardiness, green-up—if it won't produce good quality consistently, it's not of much value," admitted Wilkinson.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT would like to continue being on the cutting edge of providing our readers with significant information about the seed industry. If you have any comments or suggestions as to how we can better serve you, please let us know.