

Helps to selecting turfgrass come from research farms

■ Here's a rundown of some of the recent developments in turfgrass research, from Dr. Doug Brede, research director for the Jacklin Seed Company.

Tall fescues—"Dwarf" tall fescues are losing popularity due to shallow root systems, which make them susceptible to brown patch or other diseases, says Brede.

New, "low growing/high density" tall fescues show improved shoot density, uniform growth and good stress tolerance. But these are not good choices for athletic turf, Brede warns.

The older tall fescues, such as **Rebel II**, **Wrangler**, **Mesa**, and **Arid** still have applications for high-wear, low-water use and do very well under those conditions.

Kentucky bluegrass—The "elite" varieties will be available to turf managers everywhere in about two years. Brede says it's been a low seed yielder until recently.

Here are Dr. Reed Funk's "Seven Bluegrass Classifications," as explained by Brede at the Ohio Turf Conference:

1) "Aggressive" types: have high shoot density, and tend to spread into neighboring plants; dominate when you put them into mixtures and blends. Varieties include **Ben-Sun**; **A-34**; **Limousine**; **Princeton 104**; **Touchdown**. (For high wear conditions, i.e. athletic fields, golf course tees.)

2) "Bellevue" types have medium to good turf performance; excellent winter color; Examples include **Banff**; **Classic**; **Georgetown**; and **Trenton**.

3) "Baron" types: These exhibit extremely high seed yield potential and intermediate performance, but are susceptible to stripe smut; still, a good all-purpose turfgrass. Examples: **Baron**; **Kelly**; **Merit**; **Gnome**.

4) "Mid-Atlantic" types tend to have very deep rhizome systems and very good knitting quality for athletic field uses. They are tolerant of summer stress, but fall prey to leaf spot, so use in a mix with another bluegrass. Examples include **Huntsville**, **Preakness**, **Wabash**; and **SR 2000**.

5) "Midwest" types have an upright, narrow growth habit; they mature early and are low maintenance, especially low water use; susceptible to leaf spot. Examples include **Kenblue**; **Ginger**; **AS-21**; **South Dakota Certified**.

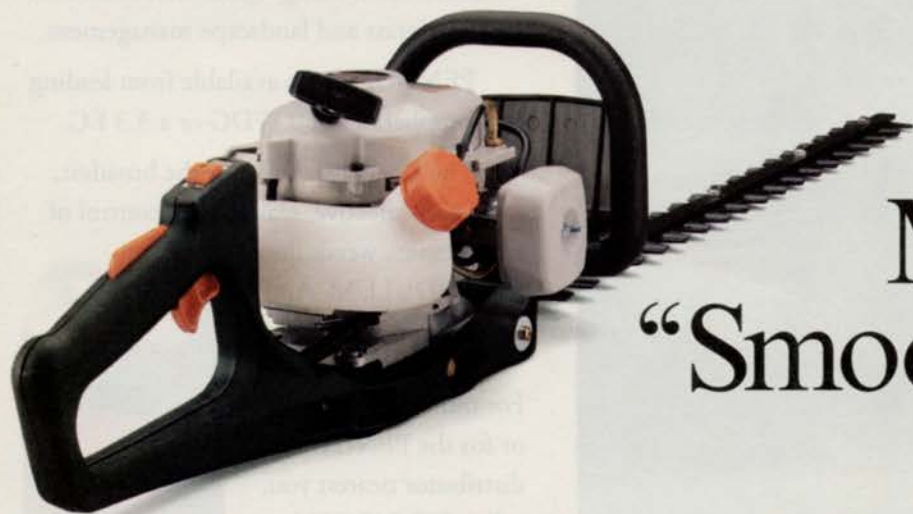
6) "North latitude, compact" types are low, compact growers that always place high in turf trials. They have excellent leaf spot resistance; late spring green up but a pale winter color.

7) Other types: these defy classification, as they can exhibit characteristics of the other six groups. *Ram I*, for example, is both a high and low-maintenance performer, Brede reports. Others include **Nustar**; **Aspen**; **Challenger**.

Bentgrasses—The most notable improvement in the new bentgrasses is their fine leaf texture, darker green color and upright leaf habit. They are also less stemmy.

But you have to be careful. According to Brede, bentgrasses which have been too hastily tested can form patches and have different growth habits, which will affect color and ball roll. *Poa annua* resistance also varies in these, says Brede.

—Terry McIver



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