

# **SPECIAL REPORT:**

## **FOCUS ON GRASS SEED**

### **It's not just a 'bag of grass seed'**

#### **A lawn or landscape pro will know the best varieties for your lawn.**

■ About as exciting as watching grass grow?

Everybody's familiar with this saying. But the truth is that watching grass grow can be exciting.

After all, who isn't excited with increasing the beauty and value of their property.

Unfortunately, most homeowners don't do a good job of installing or renovating their own lawns. They discover that it's hard work.

But there's often another factor working against homeowners—selecting the right grass seed.

**Consider your options.** Homeowners have several choices when buying grass seed for their lawns. They can:

1) Educate themselves about the best and newest varieties of seed for their lawn. (Then hope it's available at their store.)

2) Rely on the recommendation of a retail clerk who may or may not know more about grass seed than themselves.

3) Buy whatever's available and/or least expensive.

4) Or consult with an established lawn professional whose reputation is built on using quality seed and providing quality service.

Most do-it-yourselfers don't realize that some of the pre-packaged seed available in retail stores can *never* give them the lawns they want, no matter what.

Too often one of the prime ingredients of these mixtures is annual ryegrass seed. In fact, the least expensive retail mixes contain significant percentages of annual ryegrass.

Because it's less expensive to produce, it's sold at a bargain price. Unfortunately it's the seed anybody buying solely on price chooses.

**Buy the best.** Almost



without exception, the performance of annual ryegrass in a home lawn is disappointing. As its name suggests, it is temporary unlike "perennial" ryegrass which can—especially the new, improved varieties—yield a beautiful lawn in many parts of the country.

Annual ryegrass germinates rapidly, grows explosively and requires frequent mowing. Since it's so quick to germinate

Compare the dense, finer texture of the center grass plot planted improved varieties of turfgrass with the results obtained from off-the-shelf retail mixtures on either side of it. Major seed producers are constantly improving seed through testing in such plots.

*Photo by International Seeds Inc., Halsey, Ore.*

(a plus for its use when rapid soil stabilization is the goal) its leaf canopy hinders germination and development of more welcome and persistent types of grasses like Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and the new fescues.

But, most disheartening, annual ryegrass thins then, usually, disappears under summer's heat. The bare soil that it leaves behind invites weeds.

So what's the best grass seed for a home lawn?

There's no single best variety.

Actually, the new types of Kentucky bluegrass, the improved perennial ryegrasses and the constantly evolving fescues are all excellent choices.

A homeowner can check the contents of seed packages themselves for particular varieties and their percentages in the mixture or blend.

A better choice is to hire a reputable lawn or landscape professional who will know exactly the best grasses for each individual home lawn.

They'll also know how to establish and maintain the lawn so that it gives the homeowner pleasure year after year with a minimum of problems and maintenance.

With grass seed, a bargain price is rarely a bargain.

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