

LOOK FOR low seed availability through spring

by JERRY ROCHE / Editor-in-Chief

It will not be easy to find the exact seed you might want this fall, if reports from the turfseed industry are accurate.

"For a variety of reasons, the industry is no longer in a seed surplus situation on any specie of turfgrass," notes Art Wick of Lesco. "Added to the low inventories and low production acreage is the high price of alternative crops like wheat, which competes with turfgrass seed producers for new production acres.

"Added to this are the costs of eliminating open field burning, reduced availability of some pesticides critical to the clean production of grass seed, and unusual weather conditions in the Pacific Northwest."

With a late harvest, Wick expects a bot-

tleneck at the cleaning plants. "Expect potential delays," he further notes, "with some varieties."

Kentucky bluegrass yields are good—the best in 10 years, according to Turf Merchants' Steve Tubbs—and supply is good, but the crop burning restrictions affect the market deeply.

John Zajac at Zajac Performance Seeds says that common bluegrass fields are especially good. "Proprietaries are pretty much as expected," he notes.

Tubbs reports a good perennial ryegrass crop. "But demand [for perennial rye] is very strong, and there is no carryover," he says. Pickseed West's Dr. Jerry Pepin agrees: "There is a huge demand for the product, so you can expect significant price increases."

Tom Peters at Barenbrug USA believes "perennial rye should completely sell out."

In the tall fescue market, a short crop of Ky-31 and insufficient acres have "driven prices to a sold-out, high-priced situation," Tubbs notes. "1997 should end this shortage," adds Pepin.

Fine fescue acres have been dramatically reduced over the past three years due to the influx of Canadian creeper, which is significantly less expensive than American varieties.

Pepin says that there will exist a "good availability" of bentgrass varieties, even though "late heat stress reduced the yields somewhat."

Here is a complete rundown of the marketers' most requested cultivars:

KEY (AVAILABILITY):

A=expected surplus; B=adequate supply; C=limited supply.

KEY (PRICE):

H=higher prices than last season; S=stable prices, generally the same as last season; L=lower prices than last season.

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
<i>Kentucky Bluegrass</i>			
Adelphi	Advanta	B	S
Alpine	Pickseed West	B	S
America	Pickseed West	B	S
Aspen	Medalist America	B	S
Award	Jacklin	C	—
Barcelona	Barenbrug USA	B	S
Baronie	Barenbrug USA	B	S
Bartitia	Barenbrug USA	B	S
Caliber	Peterson	C	new
Cannon	Advanta	C	S
Canterbury	Cascade International	C	H
Challenger	Turf-Seed	B	S
Chateau	Fine Lawn Research	B	L
Classic	Peterson	B	S
Cynthia	Advanta	C	H

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
Dawn	Lesco	B	S
Dellwood	Zajac Performance	C	S
Dragon	Zajac Performance	C	S
Eclipse	Peterson	B	S
Fortuna	International Seeds	B	S
Gnome	Turf Merchants	A	L
Haga	Burlingham	B	S
Jefferson	Cascade International	C	H
Kelly	Medalist America	B	S
Liberty	Zajac Performance	B	L
Limousine	Roberts	B	H
Marquis	Roberts	B	H
Midnight	Turf-Seed	B	S
Nublu	Medalist America	B	S
NuGlade	Jacklin	C	—
Opal	Burlingham	C	S
Rugby	Roberts/Turf Merchants	C	H
Shamrock	Lesco	A	S
Sodnet	Turf Merchants	C	H
SR 2000	Seed Research	C	S
SR 2100	Seed Research	B	S
SR 2109	Seed Research	C	S
Total Eclipse	Jacklin	C	—

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
Touchdown	Pickseed West	B	S
Unique	Turf-Seed	B	S
Washington	Cascade /Burlingham	B	H/S
Wildwood	Lesco	A	S

Perennial Ryegrass

Accent	Medalist America	B	H
Advantage	Lesco	A	S
Advent	Jacklin	C	H
All*Star	Advanta	C	H
APM	Jacklin/Medalist America	C/B	H
Assure	Lesco	A	S
Brightstar	Turf-Seed	C	H
Calypso II	Roberts	B	H
Champion G.Q. blend	Seed Research	B	H
Chatham	Cascade International	C	H
Cutter	Pickseed West	B	H
Derby Supreme	International Seeds	C	H
Dimension	Advanta	C	H
Envy	Zajac Performance	C	H
Excel	Burlingham	B	H
Fiesta II	Pickseed West	B	H
Finelawn 240	Fine Lawn Research	C	H
Futura blends	Pickseed West	B	H
Gettysburg	Cascade International	B	H
Greenland	Barenbrug USA	B	H
Legacy	Lesco	A	S
Navajo	Turf-Seed	C	H
Omega 3	Zajac Performance	C	H
Pennant II	Burlingham	C	H
Pinnacle	Barenbrug USA	B	H
Precision	Advanta	C	H
Premier II	Barenbrug USA	C	H
Prizm	Zajac Performance	C	H
Quickstart	Turf-Seed	C	H
R-2	International Seeds	C	H
Riviera II	Roberts	C	H
Sherwood	Cascade International	C	H
SR 4010	Seed Research	B	H
SR 4200	Seed Research	B	H
Stallion Select	Fine Lawn Research	B	H
Stallion Supreme	Fine Lawn Research	C	H
Target	Medalist America	B	H
Tophat	International Seeds	C	H
Wizard	Burlingham	B	H

Turf-Type Tall Fescue

Amigo	Medalist America	C	H
Apache II	Turf-Seed	C	H
Arid	Jacklin	C	H
Barlexas	Barenbrug USA	C	H
Benton	Cascade International	C	H
Bravo	Lesco	B/C	S
Coyote	Zajac Performance	C	H
Crossfire II	Pickseed West	B	S

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
Duke	Cascade International	C	H
Era	International Seeds	C	H
Falcon II	Burlingham	B	H
Finelawn Petite	Fine Lawn Research	B	H
Finelawn 88	Fine Lawn Research	C	H
Finelawn 5GL	Fine Lawn Research	C	H
Gazelle	Zajac Performance	C	H
Guardian	Roberts	B	H
Jaguar 3	Zajac Performance	C	H
Hounddog 5	International Seeds	C	H
Lancer	Lesco	A	S
Leprechaun	Roberts	C	H
Montauk	Cascade International	C	H
Mustang II	Pickseed West	C	S
Phoenix	Barenbrug USA	C	H
Pixie	Jacklin/Medalist America	C	H
Regiment	Advanta	C	S
Renegade	Burlingham	C	H
Safari	Turf-Seed	C	H
Shortstop II	Pickseed West	C	S
Southern Choice	Burlingham	C	H
SR 8200	Seed Research	B	H
SR 8210	Seed Research	B	H
SR 8300	Seed Research	B	H
Tomahawk	Turf-Seed	C	H
Trailblazer II	Lesco	A	S
Tulsa	Advanta	C	S
Vegas	Barenbrug USA	C	H
Wrangler II	Medalist America	C	H

Fine Fescues

Aruba creeping red	Medalist America	B	S
Aurora	Turf-Seed	B	A
Bardure hard	Barenbrug USA	B	H
Bargena creeping red	Barenbrug USA	B	S
Bridgeport chewings	Barenbrug USA	B	S
Brittany chewings	Lesco	B	S
Camaro chewings	Fine Lawn Research	C	H
Cindy creeping red	International Seeds	B	H
Dawson	Advanta	B	H
Defiance hard	Lesco	C	S
Dover chewings	Medalist America	B	S
Eureka hard	Fine Lawn/Int'l. Seed	C	H/S
Flyer creeping red	Fine Lawn Research	C	H
Jasper creeping red	Pickseed West	B	H
K-2 chewings	Burlingham	C	H
Koket chewings	Burlingham	C	H
MX-86 sheeps	Jacklin	C	H
Longfellow chewings	International Seeds	C	H
Nordic hard	Zajac Performance	B	H
Raymond	Advanta	B	H
Rescue hard	Jacklin/Med. Am.	C	H
Salem creeping red	Cascade International	C	H
Scaldis	Advanta	B	H
Shade Mark	Lesco	B	S

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
creeping red			
Shademaster	Turf-Seed	C	H
Shadow	Turf-Seed	C	H
Southport chewings	Cascade International	B	H
Spartan hard	Pickseed West	C	H
SR 3100 hard	Seed Research	B	H
SR 3200 blue	Seed Research	B	H
SR 5100 chewings	Seed Research	B	H
Treasure chewings	Zajac Performance	C	H
Victory chewings	Pickseed West	C	H
Vista creeping red	Zajac Performance	B	H
Warwick hard	Cascade International	C	H
Bentgrass			
Bardot	Barenbrug USA	B	S
Cato	Pickseed West	B	L
C/C blend	Pickseed West	B	S
Cobra	International Seeds	B	S
Golf Star	Jacklin	C	S
18th Green	Zajac Performance	B	S
Lopez	Fine Lawn Research	B	S
Mariner	Pickseed West	C	S
Penn G-2	Lesco	A	S
Penncross	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Penneagle	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Pennlinks	Tee-2-Green	B	S
Princeville	Lesco	A	S
Providence	Seed Research	B	S
Putter	Jacklin/Medalist America	B	S
Regent	Barenbrug USA	B	S
SR 1020	Seed Research	B	S
SR 7100	Seed Research	B	S
Syn 92-1	Burlingham	*	*
Syn 92-5	Burlingham	*	*

CULTIVAR	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	PRICE
Tracenta	Advanta	A	L
Trust dryland	Cascade International	C	**
Viper	International Seeds	B	S
Other Seeded Cultivars			
Baby Bloomers (wildflowers)	Turf-Seed	B	S
Barkeel prairie junegrass	Barenbrug USA	C	H
Bloomers (wildflowers)	Turf-Seed	B	S
Cheyenne bermuda	Seeds West	C	S
Cody buffalograss	Native Turf Group	B	L
Jackpot	Jacklin	C	S
Primavera bermuda	Seeds West/Seed Res.	C/B	S
Pyramid bermuda	International Seeds	C	S
Sabre II Poa trivialis	International Seeds	C	S
Sahara bermuda	Seeds West	C	S
Sonesta bermuda	Seeds West	C	S
Sultan bermuda	Seeds West	C	S
Sundevil bermuda	Jacklin	C	S
Sundevil II bermuda	Medalist America	C	H
Sunrise zoysia	Jacklin/Med.Am.	C	S/H
Sunstar bermuda	Lesco	B	S
Supina bluegrass	Fine Lawn Research	B	S
Tatanka buffalograss	Native Turf Group	C	L
Traveler zoysia	Seed Research	B	S
Yuma bermuda	Seeds West	C	S
Zen 300 zoysia	Fine Lawn Research	C	S
Zen 400 zoysia	Fine Lawn Research	C	S

*Available for turf trials and observation from Burlingham until their commercial release.

**Free samples are being offered for overseeding on a limited basis by Cascade International.

Turf for low maintenance: prof's calculations say so

"Contrary to what many people think, getting rid of mowed grass and replacing it with groundcovers, mulches and wildflowers will not reduce landscape maintenance," reports Dr. Don Williams of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. "My extensive studies document that mowed grass does not deserve its 'high maintenance' label and, in fact, other forms of groundcover will almost always require more maintenance than lawns."

To calculate actual time and cost comparisons, Dr. Williams conducted a number of site-specific experiments, including one in which he timed students as they hand-weeded a 6,600 sq. ft. English ivy bed. His

results showed that one weeding required more time than it would take to mow the same area 20 times a year for 60 years.

Using his "maintenance time per unit hour" calculation method, Dr. Williams reports that at the low end of the productivity scale, one 19-inch push mower will cut 7 sq. ft. of turf per second while a 60-inch commercial mower would cover 30 sq. ft./second and highway rights-of-way mowers move at 70 sq. ft./sec.

Thus, a one-acre park could be cut in less than half an hour with a 60-inch mower while 100 acres of roadside would take 17.28 hours to mow with a large, tractor-powered unit. Even if mowers only work at

half efficiency, they mow 1 sq. ft./sec. over the course of a year.

"What other type of landscape maintenance can be done at one second per square foot per year?" he asks.

Williams also determined that using geotextiles and mulch would cost more than \$11,500 an acre for materials and labor. However, investing that \$11,500 in the bank at 6 percent interest would yield \$690 per year—more than enough to pay for 18 contracted mowings a year at \$38 per mowing.

"When it comes to low maintenance, lawns are hard to beat," the Tennessee turf prof concludes. □