

The insertion of specific genes into turfgrasses and landscape plants is in our immediate future. These genes will provide these plants with specific characteristics.

In fact, researchers at Rutgers University have genetically engineered an herbicide-resistant bentgrass. It could come to the marketplace within four or five years. Apply Roundup and the weeds die while the turfgrass remains green and healthy.

Genetic engineering will accelerate plant breeding in the green industry, and make it more precise too.

Next will come turfgrasses altered with specific genes that make these grasses resistant to diseases. To insect pests. To be either more heat or cold tolerant. To grow slower. To be more drought tolerant. We have the technology to do this now, said Virgil Meier of The Scotts Company at the recent Ohio Turfgrass Conference. But other considerations must be settled before these grasses are developed.

These include business issues.

For instance, AgrEvo holds the patent for the gene responsible for herbicide resistance in bentgrass. But there must be a mechanism to incorporate the gene into the plant. This mechanism is the gene gun and it's about the size of a bread box. It's used to *shoot*, under high pressure, tiny gold or tungsten particles coated with the desirable gene into the cells of the turfgrass plant.

The Scotts Company has exclusive rights to the gene gun for all turfgrasses, said Meier. Several other companies possess technologies also needed to develop turfgrasses in this fashion. All parties must come to a working agreement before genetically engineered turfgrasses are developed.

Then, of course, it takes several years to test the grasses for the desirable characteristics, and

Gene science will change turf breeding



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[LANDSCAPE/GROUNDS]

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Backyard oasis business blooms

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One company, many services

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Put trees, shrubs where they thrive

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Expanding landscape's boundaries

several more to produce enough seed for commercial production.

It may be 10 years before genetically-altered turfgrasses or ornamentals start appearing in the marketplace in any numbers. But it looks like they will come.

[PEOPLE & PROJECTS]

You're happy at Dennis's

The *Daily Journal of Commerce* has rated **Dennis's Seven Dees Landscaping, Inc.**, as the fifth best company to work for with 50 employees or more in Oregon and southwest Washington. Criteria included salaries, benefits, training, workplace culture, morale boosters and social responsibility. Dennis's placed as one of the LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT "LM 100" last September.

Advanstar managers win

Tom Sprague and **Kevin Icke**, lead and assistant grounds managers for LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT owner Advanstar Communications, won the "Golden Spade Award" from the Middleburg Heights, Ohio Chamber of Commerce. The award goes to a business that adds visual enhancement to the community. "The grounds of this business are strikingly pleasing to view, both architecturally and horticulturally," wrote reporter Judy Schumacher.