

## Turfgrass plots at Northwest Michigan Horticulture Research Station 2000-2001

### *Author*

L. Andrew Norman, District Turfgrass Agent,  
Northwest Region

### *Cooperators*

Suleiman Bughrara, Department of Crop and Soil Science, Tom Reed Sr., TriTurf, Inc., MSU-NMC Plant Science Program, The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program, and James Beard, International Sports Turf Institute.

### *Industry partners*

J. R. Simplot Inc., TriTurf Inc., Lebanon Seed Company, Spartan Distributors of Sparta, La Cross Landscaping of Cedar, The GreenMan's Landscape Services of Traverse City and S. White Inc.

### *Significance*

It has been nearly 40 years since turfgrass variety plots have been planted in Northwest Michigan (The old plots, at the Traverse City Country Club were first created by Jim Beard in May of 1963.). The turfgrass plots at Northwest Michigan Horticulture Research Station (NMHRS) were developed to provide scientifically based information to the turfgrass and landscape industries and property owners to further their management objectives, while protecting the water and natural resources. Many new turfgrass varieties are being developed and commercialized each year for uses such as golf course putting greens, home lawns, athletic fields or roadsides. Claims made about varieties, such as 'drought tolerant,' 'disease resistant' or 'lower growing,' are often not substantiated by objective research. The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) Commercial/Consumer trials are designed, developed and coordinated for uniform evaluation of turfgrass varieties and cultivars in the United States and Canada.

### *Objectives*

The current plots will demonstrate the performance of many commonly used and newly developed varieties and cultivars of bluegrass and tall fescue. The parameters for evaluation of the

NMHRS plots will include density, color, texture, percentage of ground covered, pest problems and environmental stresses.

### *Progress report*

The Northwest Michigan trials were developed using NTEP evaluation standards with the assistance of Suleiman Bughrara, Assistant Professor, in charge of turfgrass breeding and genetics for the MSU Crops and Soils Department, Tom Reed Sr. of TriTurf Inc. and MSU-NMC Plant Science Program students. James Beard acted in an advisory capacity by reviewing the plot rating process. Each trial area consists of two plot areas with three replications in a plot. One tall fescue plot is irrigated; the other is a non-irrigated plot. Both Kentucky bluegrass plots are irrigated.

The NTEP Kentucky Bluegrass Consumer trials at the NWMHRS were planted during late September and early October of 2000 (see related photo on page A-2). In the spring, intensive weed control and fertilization programs were developed for the season, in part to manage the weeds present in the plots. Throughout the season and at the station open house in August, bluegrass plots were shown and explained to interested donors and individuals. Thirty bluegrass cultivars are being evaluated.

A new Tall Fescue consumer trial was planted in late September and early October of 2001. This trial consists of a group of thirty-two commercially available tall fescue cultivars plus several cultivars that will soon be released to the trade. Tom Reed Sr. of TriTurf Inc. and plant science students helped in grading and seeding the plots both years and additionally with the installation of the irrigation in 2000. J. R. Simplot Inc. and Lebanon seed donated some of their new cultivars, and the balance was supplied by NTEP (USDA- Beltsville, MD. Other industry partners contributed materials, supplies or labor to complete the project. The first evaluations of the bluegrass plots occurred on October 22, 2001. Top ranking cultivars rated on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 the highest) included Serene 7.3, Northstar 7.2, Baronie 7, Boutique 6.9, Unique 6.5, Bartitia 6.7. One cultivar, Cabernet, showed significant leaf rust. ☞