



Princess May Close the Gap

In the coming years, the establishment cost of hybrid bermudagrass sports fields may start to drop, if Princess makes a successful debut.

Princess, a product of the Seed West Inc. (SWI) Warm Season Turfgrass Research Program, is described as the "world's first dense, fine textured hybrid bermudagrass variety to be available in seeded form." SWI hopes to release limited quantities of it in year or so, and if it fares well, Princess will close some of the gap in quality between the seeded and the vegetatively established bermudas.

Compare the numbers. Among the better quality seeded bermudas currently available, leaf width is about 2.5 mm and leaf length is about 29 mm; for Princess, width is 1.8 mm and length 24 mm; for the vegetatively established Tifway, width is 1.65 mm and length 19 mm. In terms of density, Princess has about 4 leaves per cm (on the first five nodes of the stem measured from the apical leaf), which is almost as good as Tifway's 4.4 leaves and considerably better than the 3 leaves of other seeded bermudas.

For overall quality and color, the gap also closes. From trial plots grown at Peninsula County Golf Club in Frankston, Australia, Superintendent David Nickson scored the overall turfgrass quality of the better vegetative bermudas at around 7 and their color at 6, while the better seeded varieties now available earned scores of less than 3 in both categories. He rated Princess in between, with scores of 5.5 for overall quality and 4.5 for color.

In terms of management, Princess has the following characteristics:

- 3/8 to 3/4 inch minimum mowing height (reel recommended);
- 3 to 7 days mowing frequency;
- 4 to 6 pounds of nitrogen per year;
- 2 pounds of seed to establish 1,000 square feet;
- 14 to 21 days for complete germination;
- 4 to 6 weeks establishment time (under ideal conditions);
- excellent drought tolerance (needs good drainage);
- very good to excellent wear resistance and recuperative ability.

If Princess ends up finding a happy home on sports fields, golf courses and other turf sites, look for more advancements in the future.

Don't Overlook Foot Protection!



Too many turf workers overlook foot protection — even though proper safety shoes can prevent crippling injuries at very little expense! If you've been gambling with your toes because you've heard myths about safety shoes, here are some facts to start you off on the right foot.

Myth 1: Safety shoes are heavy, clumsy and uncomfortable.

Fact: Most safety shoes, with toe caps to protect the most fragile parts of your feet, weigh only a few more ounces than nonprotective shoes. True, some safety features, such as metatarsal (upper foot) guards, will limit a shoe's flexibility, but most protective shoes offer an effective combination of safety features and comfort for the job. Plus, sole design and materials help prevent slips and falls — a major cause of injuries.

Myth 2: The steel caps trap heat and/or conduct cold, making the shoes too hot or cold for outdoor work.

Fact: Good safety shoes are lined to prevent direct contact with the toe cap. Many safety shoes are insulated to keep the cold out, while others are designed to "breathe" so moisture is not trapped and feet remain cool in warm conditions. Also, new nonmetallic toe caps have been developed that are nonconductive to temperature extremes.

Myth 3: Safety shoes are expensive.

Fact: Safety shoes are not expensive. Popular brands average \$50 to \$100 — about like a pair of popular-brand sneakers — and are a lot less than medical bills and lost time from work. Many shoes can be purchased directly from the manufacturer, making them even less expensive.

The above comes from the Occupational Health & Safety Administration. If you have a tip to share, send it to sportsTURF, 68860 Perez Rd., Cathedral City, CA 92234.