

NTEP Policy Committee slates upcoming trials, new trials

The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) Policy Committee met in February and slated trials in 2008 including bentgrass (putting green and fairway/tee) and fineleaf fescue. Each trial will include a total 17 trial locations, which includes several ancillary trials sites. Ancillary trials test cultivar response to specific stresses or under unique environmental conditions. For example, the bentgrass and fineleaf fescue ancillary trials will be conducted on one site each that is irrigated with saline or recycled irrigation water.

Other ancillary trials will focus tolerance to stresses such as snow mold (bentgrass putting green), traffic (bentgrass putting green and fineleaf fescue); and shade (bentgrass fairway/tee and fineleaf fescue). In addition, two bentgrass putting green locations will be established on courses where they will receive golf traffic.

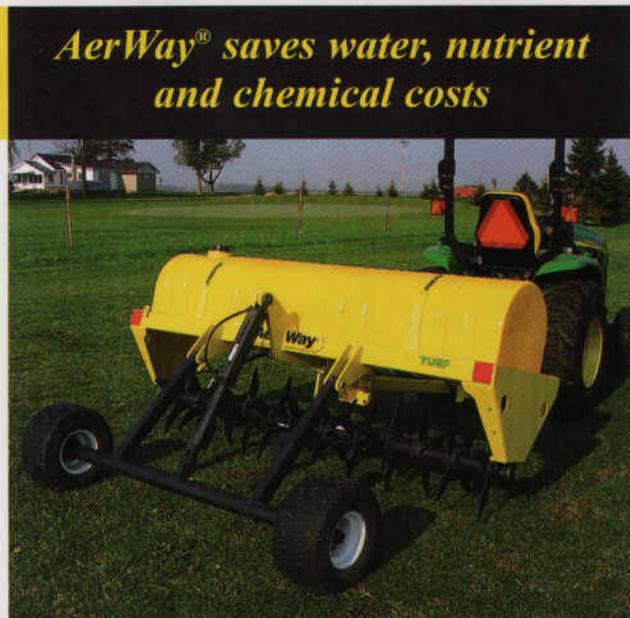
Other items discussed during the meeting include NTEP's efforts to strengthen its data collection protocols and methods, visits to NTEP trial sites and two new trials in the planning stages. These new "trait specific trials" (see below) focus on the evaluation of drought tolerance and traffic tolerance, over multiple species.

The Policy Committee also took its cultivar testing in a new direction by establishing a new program, Trait Specific Trials (TSTs). Trait Specific Trials focus on the evaluation of specific traits or stresses, comparing multiple species in the same trial at several locations. NTEP feels that the TST program will address the demands of the American consumer by identifying grasses with improved tolerance to stresses such as low-quality irrigation water, low maintenance, drought, etc. ■

NTEP is excited to be partnering with the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), through the SAFE (Safer Athletic Fields Environment) foundation, in developing and funding the traffic tolerance trials. STMA members and turfgrass researchers with traffic tolerance experience will be involved in determining trial protocols and locations.

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