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Differences among fine fescue taxa used in turf areas

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One of several fine fescue research experiments at Purdue University investigating establishment, management, and conversion barriers of fine fescues comparison with other cool-season turfgrasses. Photo by Ross Braun.

Fine fescues (*Festuca* L. spp.) comprise a group of five cool-season grasses that have an extensive history in Europe and North America and possess the ability to succeed under many different environmental and low-input site conditions. As the demands to reduce water, fertilizer, and pesticide inputs rise, demands will also rise for more low-input turfgrass options.

A new article in Crop Science reviews the five fine fescue taxa commonly used in turf areas that summarizes the history, current use, production, and availability of fine fescues. The review also addresses and discusses strengths and shortcomings of fine fescues, identifies knowledge gaps, and provides an outlook towards further research on the establishment, seed and sod production, pest and stress tolerance, and management of fine fescue taxa.

This review illustrates the importance of careful selection of specific fine fescue taxa and cultivars based on site conditions and management practices. These considerations are necessary to enhance sustainability. Further research on fine fescues is required to understand, promote, and integrate better seed and sod production, establishment, and management of these grasses by consumers. Authors propose it may be beneficial to begin to refer to each fine fescue taxa individually in future extension efforts and in developing new educational materials to describe the strengths and weaknesses of each.

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Braun, R.C., Patton, A.J., Watkins, E., Koch, P.L., Anderson, N.P., Bonos, S.A., & Brilman, L.A. (2020). Fine fescues: A review of the species, their improvement, production,

establishment, and management. Crop Science, 60.

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