



SEED & SUPPLIES FOR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

## GOT RHIZOMES?

Over the last two decades, interest in exploiting the rhizomes present in turf-type tall fescue plants has intensified as major turfgrass seed breeders and developers in New Zealand and in the Pacific Northwest focus on this particular trait<sup>1</sup>.

The main benefit touted by the earliest promoters of rhizomatous tall fescue was its supposed ability to repair itself quickly after damage or attrition, filling in bare spots in such a way that the faster-growing lawn weeds and patches of plain dirt would become a problem of the past.

While the quantity of such seed and the quality of the living plants have continued to improve, several questions need to be asked as turf managers assess the relative merits of all these claims.

- How does the spreading growth habit combine with other characteristics generally considered to be desirable in all turf-type tall fescues (dark green color, fine texture, disease resistance) and especially in sports turf (traffic tolerance, recovery potential)?
- Is there quantitative data available which actually measures the presence and performance of rhizomes?
- At what stage of growth in the life of the plant do the rhizomes become active and have a significant influence on the root behavior of the turf?

Pacific Coast Seed is offering two turf-type tall fescue varieties which display significant & beneficial rhizomatous behavior. ‘Grande II’, ‘3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium’, and ‘Rhambler SRP’ all demonstrate genuine rhizomatous expressivity and have earned Plant Variety Protection (PVP) status, a comprehensive guarantee from the USDA that they are distinct from all other tall fescue varieties and verifying that the variety performs true to kind with significant rhizomatous behavior.

In the years ahead more quantitative data will be presented in a scientific fashion which persuasively supports the argument that there is a *significant* amount of rhizomatous behavior in any given variety of tall fescue. In the meantime, given their industry ratings for turf quality<sup>2</sup> and disease resistance<sup>3</sup>, we believe that ‘Grande II’, ‘3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium’, and ‘Rhambler SRP’ offer equal or better turf performance and durability than any of the other rhizome-rich turf-type tall fescue seed available today.

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1. Leah Brillman, PhD. “Coming Soon: Creeping Tall Fescues?” Golf Course Management, August 1998. pp. 64-66.
  2. Sherratt, Street, & Holdren, “Ohio State Turfgrass Research Field Day Update”, SPORTSTURF, December 2004. Pp.12-13.
  3. Mike Richardson, PhD. unpublished data on Brown Patch disease (percent, intensity, severity), November 2004.