Empire State Green Industry Show
A Look Back at a Successful Event

The Empire State Green Industry Show, combining the conference and trade shows of the New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA), New York State Nursery/Landscape Association (NYSFI), New York State Arborists–ISA Chapter (NYSA), and New York State Flower Industries (NYSFI), proved to be an outstanding event.

Growing Together took place at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center November 15-17, 2005 and attracted 2,000 people from a wide variety of green industry professions. Golf and sports turf related professions represented 32.6% of all paid attendance. Other occupations were represented as follows: nursery and greenhouse/lawn and landscape, 21.7%; grounds maintenance (including school), 19.9%; arborists, 10.8%; sales/manufacturing, 5.8%; parks/recreation, 5.2%; misc., 4%.

When asked if they believed the involvement of all the green industry associations enhanced the quality of their education and overall experience at the show, 95% of those surveyed indicated that it did.

According to Bud Nestler, an exhibitor with Princeton Nurseries, “It was a good decision to combine several association conferences into one conference and trade show. The cross section of customers seemed to create interest in products other than the primary needs of the customer. For example, although golf courses and independent grounds maintenance people go to the show to see primarily turf equipment, fertilizers and various plant protectants, the secondary need for trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials can now be satisfied. Also, by having one show for several different areas of the horticultural profession, the cost is reduced as well as time spent away from the job. One can potentially cover all the product needs in one or two days instead of traveling to a number of shows to do the same thing.”

Jackie Crane, NYSFI President and Certified Nursery Professional with Little York Plantation said, “The first annual Empire State Green Industry Show was even more successful than expected. The vendors have expressed their pleasure with the new partnership of the green industry organizations and the set up of the trade show. This is a win-win situation for participating green industry professionals, suppliers and the organizations. I would encourage those affiliated with the nursery and landscape industry in New York to attend our next Empire State Green Industry Show.”

David Green, 2005 NYSFI President believes the show offered great benefits to NYSFI members. “There is no other educational program in the northeast that provides members with the updates they need and new information they can use. It is great to see how working together with other green industry associations provides a large network of opportunity.”

Brian Skinner, Secretary/Treasurer of NYSTA agrees. “This event allowed our members a unique opportunity to be exposed to other educational and equipment facets of the industry that they might not normally have at one time or in one location. Members had opportunities to learn about subjects and problems that they often confront in their daily work routines, as well as updating their knowledge and skill sets within the field of arboriculture. The same is true for all those in turf, landscape, golf course, flower
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Green Industry Show

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In additional field studies conducted in Ithaca and Riverhead — with a selection of cul-
tivars with variable weed suppressive perform-
ance and using a large number of replicates for 
statistical power — the fine fescue cultivars 
Intrigue, Columba, and Sandpiper proved to be
more weed suppressive (less than 5%-weed
infestations) over time than other fine leaf fescue cultivars. Repliant II, Wilma and Ox-
ford were also good performers in terms of weed
suppression, while Borealis, Rebel II tall fescue, Sylvia High and several numbered sele-
tions were much less suppressive (greater
than 15%-30% infestations). All cultivars were
established at a seeding rate of 4 lbs/1000 sq.
feet. Although our data suggest that certain cul-
tivars possess differential ability to suppress
weeds over time, further studies are required
to improve our understanding of the factors in-
fluencing weed suppression over time, includ-
ing the impact of root exudation by weed sup-
pressive cultivars.

What Makes It Work

With Dr. Frank Schroeder in the Chemistry
Department at Cornell, we isolated and identi-
ified the main bioactive constituent in the in-
hibitory root exudates collected from the
chewings fescue cv. Intrigue. This highly active
inhibitory root exudate was identified as m-tyrosine, a simple
 derivative of p-tyrosine. M-Tyrosine was found
in large quantities in root exudates of chewings
fescue cultivars, strong red creeping fescues and
Arizona fescue. It suppressed weed seed
germination and seedling growth in both soil
and soilless assays, generally at concentrations
of 100μM or less, which are in the range of
application rates of several prevalent herbi-
cides such as pendimethalin.

Similarly, m-tyrosine exposure at low con-
centrations resulted in stunted root growth,
reduced cell division and likely impact on cell elongation or cell
growth and development in developing weed
seedlings. The inhibitor is not highly
selective in that it is active with every
weed and crop species tested, but large
crabgrass, barnyardgrass, dandelion,
mustard, cress, and other small-seeded
weeds are highly sensitive to its pres-
ence. Currently, we are attempting to
further identify its mode(s) of action,
and determine, with industry support,
its potential to be developed as a soil-
applied natural herbicide.

In ongoing studies with the NYSDOT and
Dr. Senesac, we are evaluating a diverse collec-
tion of 25 turfgrass species and cultivars for their
ability to establish across New York in a variety of
field and roadside settings. Our better fescue
performers are part of this trial. The ultimate
objective is to select a turfgrass cultivar or mix-
ture that is tolerant of drought, salinity and low
fertility, requires limited mowing, and estab-
lishes successfully such that it is weed suppres-
sive.

A daunting task? Perhaps, but our collabo-
rations with Dr. Brown, a turfgrass breeder,
with the University of Rhode Island to select for
improved weed suppression and stress tolerance
among existing cultivars of creeping red
chewings and hard fescues as well as fescue/
perennial ryegrass hybrids will help us to ad-
dress this goal.

Although the selection of highly weed sup-
pressive turfgrasses is novel from both a tradi-
tional and molecular perspective, the develop-
ment of fescue turfgrasses with enhanced stress
tolerance is not. The combination of these at-
tributes will hopefully lead to the future de-
velopment and release of value-added turfgrasses
which have utility as weed suppressive turfs in
low maintenance settings, including roadides
as well as landscapes. In addition, attempted
hybridization or hybridization with closely related
species such as perennial ryegrass may lead to
characteristics including more rapid establish-
ment and growth as well as enhanced weed
suppression and stress tolerance.

Led by A. Weston and Celine Berlin

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