

MythBusters™ – Dr. Leah Brilman Style

Dr. Leah Brilman, dressed as host Jamie Hyneman of the television show *MythBusters™* debunked popular myths often heard by turf managers when they are considering the right seed for their project. Brilman surprised even her co-workers when she gave her *Myth-Busters™* presentation at Seed Research of Oregon's 2010 Seed Technology Camp last summer. Spirits and cameras were raised by Brilman's humorous impersonation.

Myth #1: Cheap seed saves customers money. **BUSTED!**

There are added costs for cheap seed. Cheap seed is more likely to be an older cultivar that has less resistance to disease and requires more fungicides. Older cultivars need more fertilizer, more water and reseeding is often required. Cheap seed is often untested and not cleaned thoroughly. Weed seed can be present in cheap seed including *Poa annua*.

Remember, don't just ask the price – ask about the quality of the seed.



Myth #2: All fine fescues perform the same. **BUSTED!**

Improved cultivars, tested on lawns, golf course fairways and for overseeding, have better stress and wear tolerance. Some Chewings, like SR 5130 or red fescues like SR 5250 or Shoreline act as a weed repellent excreting a natural herbicide into the soil that retards the germination of crabgrass and broadleaf weeds while limiting the root growth of weeds.

Remember, when you use improved cultivars you reduce your maintenance.

Myth #3: All Kentucky bluegrass blends are the same: cheap or big seed cultivars perform as well as others. **BUSTED!**

High turf-quality cultivars, especially those with superior drought resistance, wear tolerance and sod strength, often have higher seed costs. The cheapest bluegrasses are common and BVMG types. While requiring more water, fertilizer

and maintenance, they have poor turf quality and density.

Remember, when deciding on Kentucky bluegrass, ask for superior bluegrass cultivars.

Myth #4: Salt tolerance is the same for all cultivars. **BUSTED!**

As more turf sites use effluent water for irrigation, salt tolerance has become more important in all species. Research demonstrates that seedling salt tolerance can be significantly different than that of the mature plant. Seed Research screened perennial ryegrass,

bluegrass and tall fescue cultivars for germination under high salt and found Harrier, Penguin and SR 4420 perennial ryegrass had superior germination at high salt levels. Watchdog, Grande, SR 8600 and Grande II tall fescues had significantly better germination at high salt levels. Bluegrasses with substantially higher germination included Arcadia, Orfeo, Emblem, SR 2284 and Cheetah.

Remember, when dealing with high soil salt levels, talk to Seed Research.

Myth #5: Bentgrass interseeding doesn't work. **BUSTED!**

Interseeding does work and is used to introduce new and better varieties into old turf. It's a great solution to totally renovating and reseeding greens when there is a lack of funds. Interseeding improves the quality and density of existing turf. We've seen conversion on multiple courses. Interseeding works best with more aggressive cultivars. It is best done in the warmer seasons and it tends to reduce the growth of *Poa annua*.

Remember: Interseeding can be an alternative to renovation and reseeding.

Myth #6: Tall fescues with rhizomes and spreading perennial ryegrasses repair damage to turf. **CONFIRMED!**

Tall fescue with rhizomes and spreading ryegrasses have been documented for many years. These attributes have been integral in Seed Research's breeding programs for both species. Although they are important for repair, you should not select a cultivar based on only one characteristic. In addition to having rhizomes cultivars such as Grande II, SR 8650, Speedway and SR 8600, tall fescues have density, disease resistance and high turf quality. Perennial ryegrasses such as SR 4600, Harrier and Zoom have spreading growth, Gray Leaf Spot resistance and excellent turf quality.

Remember: Select cultivars based on multiple characteristics confirmed by independent trials.

Myth #7: Low cost producers can provide the same level of support as Seed Research of Oregon. **BUSTED!**

Seed Research is made up of dedicated agronomists with contacts in research and industry. If we don't have the answer, we can find out who does. We work with most universities across the country and know the experts world wide. Investments in quality seed pay off with less need for other inputs and maintenance.

Remember: Buying seed from the knowledgeable experts at Seed Research of Oregon will save you money in the long run.