REGISTRATION OF CULTIVARS

Registration of ‘Award’ Kentucky Bluegrass

‘Award’ Kentucky bluegrass (Poa pratensis L.) (Reg. no. CV-55, PI 599222) is a turf-type cultivar released in August 1996 by Simplot Turf and Horticulture, Post Falls, ID. The experimental designations for Award were 91-3376 and J-3376. Award originated as a highly apomictic, single-plant selection from hybrid cross number 89-1037, made in the field in July 1989. Pollen from ‘Midnight’ Kentucky bluegrass (2) was used to pollinate plants of ‘Limousine’ (1). Seed harvested from the Limousine mother plants was individually sown into cells of greenhouse flats during the spring of 1990. The resulting plants were grown in a spaced-plant field nursery of 33 500 plants. Offspring with characteristics dissimilar to Limousine, the female parent, were flagged during maturation in the spring of 1991. Plant number 91-3376 was identified as being different from Limousine by its seedhead characteristics at maturity. Seed harvested from this plant was used to establish a turf trial in September 1991, a replicated seed yield trial in August 1992, and a plant variety protection (PVP) trial in June 1994, near Post Falls.

Award was selected for density and color traits similar to its pollen parent, Midnight. However, it can be differentiated from Midnight based on 11 botanical measures (as recorded in Award’s U.S. PVP application no. 9700382), which include a shorter panicle, greater panicle density in seed production, and a later reproductive maturity. Award demonstrated a significantly (P = 0.01) shorter flag leaf sheath length than Midnight in 2 yr of field evaluations.

Progeny trials were conducted in spaced-plant nurseries established near Post Falls in May 1994 to determine the level of apomixism. Of 1580 Award plants, 2.7% were variants in the vegetative (preheading) stage, 1.2% were heading maturity variants, 0% seedhead variants, 0.7% miniature plants, and 0.1% were headless plants. In spaced-plant nurseries, Award averaged 95% apomictic, but varied from 90 to 99% depending upon weather and year.

About 1 out of every 100 Award plants are shorter in mature culm length, averaging 28 cm versus 55 cm for the majority form, but with a similar panicle appearance. Only about one out of every 500 plants exceeds the majority plant form in culm length, making Award appear very uniform in seed production. These taller variants have similar panicles with slightly less purple coloration and culms up to 87 cm in length. aberrant progeny are rogued from seedstock fields to ensure continued uniformity and stability, but they will continue to occur in every generation.

Award was equal to the top-rated cultivar in overall turf quality in the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) trials for Kentucky bluegrass, established in 1995 (3). In the same trials, Award demonstrated improved drought tolerance (dormancy), resistance to leafspot and melting out [caused by Drechslera poae (Baudys) Shoem], necrotic ring spot (caused by Leptosphaeria korrae J. Walker and A.M. Smith), summer rust (caused by Puccinia coronata Corda var. coronata), leaf rust (caused by Puccinia coronata Corda var. coronata), stem rust (caused by Puccinia graminis Pers.:Pers.), stripe smut [caused by Ustilago striiformis (Westend.) Niesl.], and dollar spot (caused by Lanzia Sacc. or Moellerodiscus Henn. spp.), and susceptibility to powdery mildew (caused by Erysiphe graminis DC. ex Merat).

In 5 yr of commercial seed production, Award has shown the potential for high yields of quality seed, with freedom from ergot [caused by Claviceps purpurea (Fr.) Tul.] honeydew and sclerotia. Award has exhibited no adverse reactions to labeled Kentucky bluegrass pesticides.

Award is recommended for lawns, golf courses, parks, and sports turf in areas where Kentucky bluegrass is well adapted for turf. It can be grown in full sun or some shade. Award is compatible in blends and mixtures with other cool-season turfgrasses.

Breeder seed, first harvested in 1995, is maintained by Simplot Turf and Horticulture. Seed propagation is limited to four cycles of increase: Breeder, Foundation, Registered, and Certified. U.S. Plant Variety Protection status for Award has been applied for (PVP certificate no. 9700382).

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References and Notes

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Registration of ‘Liberator’ Kentucky Bluegrass

‘Liberator’ Kentucky bluegrass (Poa pratensis L.) (Reg. no. CV-56, PI 603099) is a turf-type cultivar released in August 1997, by Simplot Turf and Horticulture, Post Falls, ID. Liberator was tested under the experimental designations 92-2572 and ZPS-2572.

Liberator was developed from a highly apomictic, single-plant selection from hybrid cross number 90-0336, hybridized in the greenhouse during winter of 1990. Pollen from ‘Glade’ Kentucky bluegrass (1) was used to pollinate plants of breeding line ‘50-14.’ Breeding line 50-14 originated from a collection of ‘Midnight’ Kentucky bluegrass and susceptible to powdery mildew (caused by Erysiphe graminis DC. ex Merat).

Seed harvested from plants of 50-14 were individually sown into cells of greenhouse flats during the spring of 1992. The resulting plants were transferred to a field nursery of 28 800 plants near Post Falls. Offspring with characteristics dissimilar to 50-14, the female parent, were flagged during maturation in spring of 1992. Plant number 92-2572 was identified as being different from 50-14 by its leaf color and texture prior to heading. Seed harvested from this plant was used to establish a turf trial in September 1992, a replicated seed yield trial in August 1993, and a plant variety protection (PVP) trial in June 1994 near Post Falls.

Liberator is most similar in form and appearance to the cultivar, ‘Midnight’ (2); however, Liberator can be differenti-