Registration of ‘Audubon’ Strong Creeping Red Fescue

‘Audubon’ strong creeping red fescue [Festuca rubra L. subsp. rubra Schreb.] (Reg. no. CV-95, PI 641951) was released by Jacklin Seed by Simplot, Post Falls, ID, in September 2004. First certified seed was produced in 2004. Audubon was tested under the experimental designation JF-1.

Audubon is a turf-type cultivar developed from the maternal progenies of 21 lines, tracing 81% to Jacklin Seed experimental lines whose maternal parentage originated in old cemeteries in Seattle, WA, and Atlanta, GA, and the remaining 19% to Medalist America experimental lines obtained through acquisition of Northrup King’s turf division. This was material from old turfgrass selections made by Howard Kaerwer. Breeding methods used during early stages of development included open-pollinated single-plant selections and isolated polycross blocks in 1996 and 1997. This was followed by one cycle of screening and selection from turf plots based on dark color, fine leaf texture, and summer survivability. In later stages of development, five isolated polycrosses were harvested in July, 1998, which was later followed by another cycle of selection in turf plots. The initial selection criteria for the 21 maternal progenies were improved summer turf performance, similar maturity, moderate plant height, fine leaf texture, darker leaf color, tolerance to stem rust [caused by Puccinia graminis Pers.:Pers.], and increased seed yield. Ten lines were the top performers in turf plots in the 1997 Jacklin turfgrass trial located near Poolesville, MD, eight were the top performers in Enon, OH, and three were the top performers in Allentown, NJ. In April 1999, plugs were extracted from each of the 21 turf plots and 100 plants of each were planted in the JF-1 breeder block near Rathdrum, ID.

In spring 2000, 900 plants were removed before anthesis on the basis of snow mold [caused by Microdochium nivale (Fr.) Samuels & I.C. Hallett] damage, leaf color, leaf texture and poor seed yield. The remaining 1200 plants were harvested as Breeder seed in July 2000. A portion of seed was used as the official entry in the 2003 National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) trial.

In spaced plants near Rathdrum, ID, Audubon demonstrated an early to medium heading date from 8 to 11 May, with initial anthesis 10 to 14 d later. This is earlier than ‘Cindy’ (Alderson and Sharp, 1995). Audubon has a shorter plant height to the inflorescence of 59.9 cm; shorter panicle length from tip of panicle node of 10.0 to 11.2 cm; flagleaf length was from 7.3 to 9.0 cm; flagleaf width was wider, from 2.9 to 3.0 mm; lemma length (straight) was shorter, from 5.5 to 5.8 mm. In production, Audubon appears most similar to Cindy; however, Audubon has a shorter lemma length.

Audubon has shown good turf quality in U.S. trials (Morris; 2004). It has exhibited good resistance to red thread [caused by Laetisaria fuciformis (McAlpine)] and melting out [caused by Bipolaris sorokiniana (H. sorokiniana in Sorokin) (syn. H. sativum Pammel, C.M. King and Jackson)] and summer patch [caused by Magnaporthe poae Landschoot and Jackson]. Audubon exhibits good mowing quality, early spring green up, and dark fall color (Morris, 2004).

Audubon is recommended for home lawns, parks, and golf course roughs and out-of-play areas where strong creeping red fescue is suitable for turf. Breeder seed is maintained by Jacklin Seed. Seed propagation is limited to three generations of increase, one each of Foundation, Registered, and Certified. U.S. Plant Variety Protection will not be sought for Audubon. Limited quantities of seed are available on request from the corresponding author.

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References


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