

Turfgrass



Testing 'FloraDwarf' bermudagrass

There are more than four million acres of managed turfgrass in Florida, with 75 percent of these in residential lawns. Several warm-season turf species are important for use in Florida. The decision of which turfgrass species to use is based on the desired maintenance effort and geographic location within the state.

The turfgrass breeding program, located at Gainesville, Ft. Lauderdale, and Belle Glade, has contributed to the success of several turfgrass varieties. In the 1950s, the modern era of turfgrass breeding began with the identification of superior lines. G.C. Horn was instrumental in the development and selection of the well-known St. Augustine-grass variety, **Floritam**, the first southern chinch-bug-resistant variety. Today, it is believed to make up more than one third of all St. Augustine-grass lawns in Florida. In the 1970s, Al Dudeck and Phil Busey began evaluation and breeding programs at Gainesville and Ft. Lauderdale. During the next two decades, the under-

standing of chinch bug resistance, drought tolerance, and classification and taxonomy of St. Augustinegrass improved. Since

1997, the warm-season turfgrass breeding program has been centered in Belle Glade at the Everglades REC. Brian Scully evaluates bermudagrass, zoysiagrass and centipedegrass for adaptation to Florida conditions. The bermudagrass program evaluates grasses for golf fairway applications, while the zoysiagrasses are evaluated for residential and commercial lawns. Russell Nagata breeds St. Augustinegrass for residential lawn application, focusing especially on shade and pest tolerance.

The major accomplishments of the breeding programs have been to develop well-adapted varieties for Florida conditions. The selection and development of southern chinch bug resistance in Floritam and **Floralawn St. Augustinegrass** is of major importance. Development of varieties resistant to St. Augustine Decline Strain of Panicum Mosaic Virus (PMV-SAD) was also important.

Turfgrass Varieties

Turf Type	Variety	Date
St. Augustinegrass	Floratine	1960
	Floritam	1973
	Floralawn	1985
Bermudagrass	FloraTex	1994
	FloraDwarf	1995