

UGA-bred turfgrasses

Research from Georgia to the world



Tif-varieties grow on many golf courses around the world (top) and on sports fields like Sanford Stadium in Athens, Ga.

For more than 60 years, scientists with the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences have worked to provide research-based information for the turfgrass industry. The warm-season turfgrass breeding program began in the 1950s and continues today with programs focused on the development of sustainable bermudagrass, centipedegrass, zoysiagrass and seashore paspalum cultivars.

UGA-bred seashore paspalum covers golf courses along the world's coastlines. This species slowly

grew into a popular member of the UGA turfgrass family. Tried and true Tif-varieties, like TifGrand, cover golf courses and sports fields across the nation and the globe. UGA's grasses have been used at some of the most popular sports venues like the Olympics and World Cup.

Turfgrass researchers at UGA continue to develop and evaluate new turfgrasses in search of cultivars that require fewer inputs and are more disease and pest tolerant. The UGA Turfgrass Team focuses on drought tolerance, among other traits, and some promising lines have already been identified. UGA scientists also strive to stretch the scientific boundaries with novel approaches to management and education, like

using mobile sensing units or creating mobile applications for today's smartphones.

Turfgrass Extension specialists at UGA extend this research to the general public and to the green industry to make research findings accessible to turfgrass professionals, homeowners and county Extension agents. UGA turfgrass faculty aim to train new scientists through the college's academic programs and prepare industry professionals to create a well-educated workforce.

Thriving on the world stage

Four varieties of University of Georgia turfgrass developed under Wayne Hanna's leadership in Tifton, Ga., thrive on the national and international stage: TifGrand, TifSport, TifEagle and TifBlair centipedegrass. Each has its own strengths that appeal to golf courses, sports field or home lawns.

TifEagle, released in 1999, is popular among golf course superintendents because it provides a smooth putting surface for golfers and is uniform in texture and color.

Cold tolerance and uniformity are what set TifSport apart. It's a versatile turf that can be used on golf courses, athletic fields and lawns.

There is an increasing trend for home lawns and sports fields, in addition to golf courses, to be planted in TifGrand because it can thrive in 60 percent shade and is tolerant of severe weather

Hanna's successor, Brian Schwartz, says the newest UGA turfgrass, TifGrand, provides a unique, emerald green color and can be mowed at a wide range of heights. TifGrand is often used around greens and on shady tee boxes, providing superintendents with a strong color contrast and good plant density. It's the perfect turfgrass for an entire golf course, especially for those with lower maintenance budgets. 

For more details on UGA-bred turfgrasses, see the website www.GeorgiaTurf.com.