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International Turfgrass

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Japanese Society of Turfgrass Science – 2026 Spring Meeting Recap

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Overview

The 2026 Spring Meeting of the Japanese Society of Turfgrass Science (JSTS) brought together researchers, turf managers, and industry professionals to exchange the latest knowledge in turfgrass science and management. Approximately 150 attendees actively discussed emerging topics in turfgrass science at Tokyo University of Agriculture. The program included a field tour, focus group sessions, a symposium, and research presentations. A central theme of the meeting was the growing importance of climate adaptation, labor efficiency, and sustainable turfgrass management.

Field Tour - Saitama Stadium 2002

The meeting began with a field visit to Saitama Stadium 2002, where more than 50 participants observed advanced turf management practices under low-light and high-use conditions.



The stadium employs a cool-season turf system supported by subsurface heating and cooling, drainage control, and integrated management practices, including fertilization and pest control. The visit highlighted the importance of environmental control for maintaining high-quality turf. through both field observations and discussions in the meeting room, active exchanges of opinions took place, helping participants understand how this major stadium—one of the largest soccer venues in Asia—is maintained.

Golf Course Focus Group Session

The golf course session reviewed trends over the past decade and highlighted four key themes: climate change, introduction of warm-season turfgrass to putting greens, technological development, and operational challenges. Bermudagrass and Zoysiagrass were discussed as important options for coping with higher temperatures, although challenges such as winter performance and shade tolerance remain.





School Turfgrass Focus Group Session

In the School Turfgrass session, historical practical approaches for managing turf in educational settings were presented. Discussions focused on sustainable maintenance practices, cost-effective management, and balancing turf quality with usage intensity. These findings highlight the importance of practical,

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field-oriented solutions tailored to the unique conditions of school environments.

Turfgrass Culture Award Lecture

The Ikushiba Project: Community-Based Turfgrass as Social Infrastructure was awarded. The project introduced by Kazuko Ogi, is a long-term community-based turfgrass initiative carried out in Reimeibashi Park in Harumi, Tokyo. Ongoing for more than 13 years, the project aims to create a safe and welcoming lawn environment where infants and children can play freely.



A defining feature of this initiative is that turfgrass management is conducted by local volunteers, fostering strong community engagement and shared responsibility. Beyond its role as green space, the project is framed as a form of "social infrastructure," contributing to emotional well-being, safety, prevention of social isolation, community development, citizen participation, and the enhancement of green infrastructure.

Overall, the project illustrates how turfgrass can extend its value beyond landscape functionality to support broader social benefits, including community cohesion and improved quality of life in urban areas.

Symposium

The symposium highlighted recent advances in warm-season turfgrass under climate change. A clear trend is the shift toward heat-tolerant, low-maintenance cultivars, which are expected to expand in use in Japan. New cultivars such as Bermudagrass 'Tahoma 31' and 'TifTuf', Centipedegrass 'Tif Elite', and Zoysiagrass 'Fox' and 'Healing grass' demonstrated improved stress tolerance, turf quality, and reduced management requirements. The presentations also emphasized the importance of field evaluation under local conditions. Overall, warm-season turfgrass is expected to play an increasingly important role in future turf management.

Oral Presentations

A total of 10 oral presentations were provided.

The first three focused on new tools for turfgrass maintenance. Updated technologies for soccer stadiums and grass areas in tennis courts were introduced. In soccer stadiums, even for warm-season turfgrass, soil cooling systems help maintain quality during summer by reducing heat stress. In tennis court grass areas, robotic mowing improves grass coverage and efficiency while reducing labor. Another study using SOFIX analysis showed that soil microbial levels and C/N ratios remained relatively stable over multiple years, contributing to consistent turf quality.

Two turf disease studies were reported. A study on bentgrass anthracnose (*Colletotrichum cereale*) in Japan showed that isolates were grouped into two types (Clade A and B) with different seasonal patterns and temperature preferences. Both types were pathogenic, indicating diverse characteristics of the disease. Another study on large patch disease showed that most *Rhizoctonia solani* isolates were adapted to high temperatures, suggesting a shift in the ecology of the pathogen.



Also, two insightful presentations on pest control were highlighted. One study using pheromone traps showed changes in the emergence patterns of scarab beetles damaging turfgrass, with some species appearing earlier than previously reported. This suggests that control timing may need to be reconsidered. Another study using pitfall traps showed that adult weevils were active from spring to autumn with multiple peaks, and their activity period has become longer than previously reported.

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The results also indicated localized distribution within the same site, suggesting that site-specific and timely control is essential. Finally, three weed control topics were discussed.

Three weed management highlights were presented. One study suggested that long-term rotation with herbicides having different modes of action may help suppress SU-resistant annual bluegrass populations. Another noteworthy presentation showed that imazaquin, an imidazolinone ALS inhibitor, provided excellent control of green kyllinga carrying the Pro197 ALS mutation, while efficacy was reduced against biotypes with the Trp574 mutation. This finding suggests that imazaquin could become a useful tool for managing certain ALS-resistant populations. The final presentation demonstrated that annual bluegrass can emerge from immature seedheads and continue emerging over an extended period, highlighting the need for season-long weed management.

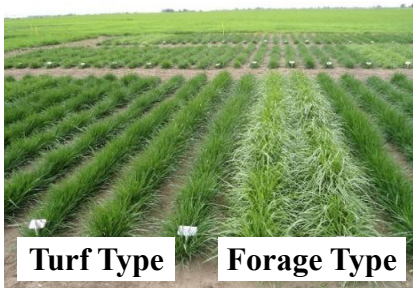
The Story of Grand Prix: The First Turf-Type Tall Fescue Developed in Argentina

by Criadero El Cencerro S.A.

Anyone who has worked in turfgrass breeding knows that behind the commercial release of a new cultivar lies years of research, selection, and genetic improvement. Grand Prix is not an exception.

The first Argentine-bred turf-type tall fescue was developed by a family-owned company located in southern Buenos Aires Province, with the goal of providing turfgrass users with genetics specifically adapted to their needs.

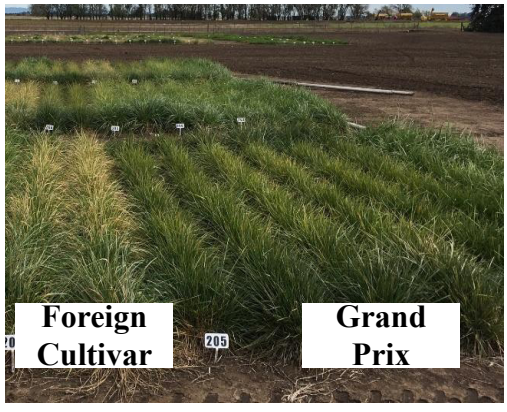
Criadero El Cencerro's history with turf-type fescues began in 1996, when the company licensed El Dorado, a cultivar of U.S. origin. It was a pioneering stage for the Argentine turf market, and over time the company introduced some of the first turf-type tall fescues available in the country.



Turf-type tall fescues distinguished themselves from forage-type fescues by offering important advantages, including greater traffic tolerance and superior aesthetic quality.

As the turfgrass market continued to grow and become more professionalized, demand also increased for materials specifically developed for ornamental and sports turf applications.

However, one challenge remained constant over the years: foreign cultivars frequently exhibited health and persistence issues under Argentine conditions.



The Ducos family has always viewed challenges as opportunities. Drawing on previous experience in plant breeding programs, they set out to develop their own turf-type tall fescue capable of thriving under Argentina's diverse environmental and production conditions.

By 2011, after more than 15 years of evaluating a large number of internationally recognized reference materials, only eight genotypes met the criteria required to enter Criadero El Cencerro's breeding program.

The project formally began in 2011 and intensified through regular and rigorous evaluation of individual plants. Each plant was carefully observed to identify outstanding traits and verify their stability over time. Only those materials capable of delivering a significant qualitative improvement advanced within the program.

The breeding objectives were clear from the outset: to identify and combine superior traits related to adaptation across different soil types and climates, disease resistance and plant health, reduced input requirements, dark green color, fine leaf texture,

Continued on next page

bunch-type growth habit and long-term persistence.

After four years of rigorous evaluation of parent plants and their progenies across multiple experimental lines, in 2014 elite individuals were identified and selected, ultimately giving rise to the new cultivar.



Experimental line, 2013.

The next stage was perhaps the most demanding: validating performance against the leading commercial cultivars available on the market, both in terms of turf quality and high-quality seed production.

To evaluate a new tall fescue variety for turf use, the following criteria are considered:

• Establishment rate and initial ground cover.

• Visual quality: color, density, uniformity, and leaf texture.

• Persistence and seasonal performance.

• Tolerance to drought, heat, cold, and traffic.

• Disease tolerance.

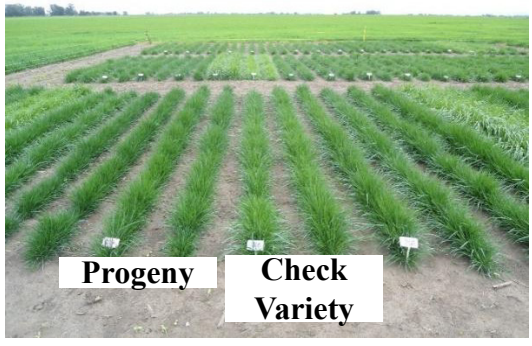
• Recovery capacity after stress.

• Mowing quality.

• Seedhead production.

The results confirmed the potential of the new genetic development, demonstrating highly competitive levels of quality and performance. In addition, the cultivar was evaluated in both the United States and Europe, where it also showed outstanding performance.

In 2019, the cultivar was officially registered with Argentina's National Seed Institute (INASE) under the name Grand Prix. One year later, commercial sales began, making it the first turf-type tall fescue developed in Argentina.



General combining ability trial. Progeny under evaluation and control plot.

Today, Grand Prix represents far more than a new cultivar. Every seed is the result of more than two decades of work, research, and commitment to advancing Argentine turfgrass breeding. It is a development that reaffirms Criadero El Cencerro's vision: to provide innovative solutions adapted to market needs and supported by high-quality genetics.



Grand Prix in ornamental turf applications.

INTERNATIONAL TURFGRASS SOCIETY

Exchanging Turfgrass Knowledge Worldwide

The Interntational Turfgrass Society (ITS) is a not-for-profit scientific organization that encourages research and education in turfgrass science.

ITS was established in 1969 and promotes communication among international turfgrass researchers by organizing international conferences on turfgrass research and all phases of turfgrass production and use.

International Turfgrass Research Conferences (ITRC) are held at 4-year intervals and the next ITRC will be held in Canada in 2029.

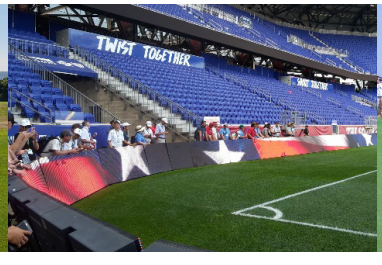
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- Access to the Members Only section of the ITS website
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