

## 2017 Top Performing Tall Fescue, Kentucky Bluegrass, and Fine Fescue Cultivars for North Carolina

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A great number of tall fescue and bluegrass cultivars have been tested in North Carolina which provide excellent performance based on cultivar trials. *The 2014 and 2016 Recommended Tall Fescue and Kentucky bluegrass Cultivar lists contain many great cultivars that still should perform well in NC.* These lists are still available at [www.turffiles.ncsu.edu](http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu). Many of these cultivars are still being sold in grass seed products and would be expected to perform very well in NC assuming they are properly established and maintained. The lists are long, but that makes it easier for users to find good-performing tall fescue and bluegrass cultivar across the state.

While Kentucky bluegrass cultivars do not enjoy the same level of success in North Carolina as they do further north, there are still some great cultivars that can be managed as a nice turf either as a monostand or planted as a mixture with tall fescue cultivars. Also, the Kentucky bluegrasses generally perform better in western NC than they do on the piedmont.

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*The approach for this year's list was to highlight the great cultivars we tested the last few years in NTEP, A-LIST, regional, and sponsored trials.*

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None of the tall fescue cultivars in our tests have been completely resistant to brown patch (*Rhizoctonia spp.*). Using appropriate management practices remains the primary means of reducing injury from this disease. Kentucky 31 (K-31), is a coarse bladed, upright tall fescue that usually produces lower density and the lowest quality ratings in the NC field trials. Using appropriate management practices remains the primary means of reducing injury from this disease. Generally Kentucky bluegrass cultivars are susceptible to summer patch when grown in Raleigh which can be difficult to manage most years without the use of fungicides.

Keep in mind that companies often blend multiple cultivars together for sale in the retail market but use a simple Name Brand to enhance brand recognition. The combination of grasses is often recommended since there is no one grass that will perform well under all conditions. So when shopping for tall fescue seed, the name on the front of the bag may not represent or identify the cultivars that make up the product. To add to the confusion, the cultivars and/or the percentage of each cultivar within the bag of a Name Brand may change from year to year but the Name Brand often remains unchanged. Again, this is done for brand recognition. Under close inspection, however, the bags are required to list the cultivar(s) and the percentage of each cultivar by weight within the bag. Customers often ask about matching our recommended cultivars to those listed on the bag seed label. Unfortunately, it may not be easy to find a bag that contains only cultivars from our recommended lists. It is suggested, however, that at least 50% of the contents consist of NCSU's high-performing cultivars. The higher the percentage, the greater the chances of obtaining/maintaining a quality turf.

Table 1: The following tall fescue cultivars performed well in tests conducted between 2013 and 2016. These tests included the current NTEP study, regional trial, A-LIST trials, and a sponsored trial. Not all of these cultivars will be available in 2017.

07 Dust	Fayette	Rebounder
07Walk	Fesnova	Regenerate
4 <sup>th</sup> Millennium SRP	Firebird 2	Rhambler 2 SRP
Amity	Firecracker SLS	Rhizing Moon
Aquaduct	Firewall	Rowdy
AST 5112	Foxhound	Rockwell
AST 1736	Golconda	Saltillo
ATF 1612	Grande 3	Screamer LS
ATF 1704	GTO	Supersonic
Avenger II	Hemi	Swagger
Bizem	Hot Rod	Tara
Black Tail	Houndog8	Technique
Bloodhound	Hover	Temple
Bullseye	IS-TF 311	Temptation
Caesar	Kingdom	Terrano
Catalyst	Leonardo	Thor
Crossfire 4	Maestro	Thunderstruck
Dakota	Memphis	Titanium 2LS
Da Vinci	Meridian	Tonto
Diablo	Michelangelo	Traverse 2 SRP
DTT 43	Mustang	Turfway
Dynamite SLS QS	Paramount	Valkyrie LS
Embrace	Rain Dance	Wichita
Escalade	Reflection	Xtender
Falcon V	Raptor III	
Faith	Rebel IV	

Table 2: The following Kentucky bluegrass cultivars performed well in tests conducted between 2012 and 2016, with particular attention to 2016 data. Not all of these cultivars will be available in 2017.

Aramintha	Blue Note	NuChicago
Avid	Cabernet	Skye
Award	Keeneland	Sudden Impact
Baron	Legend	Thermal Blue
Barvette HGT	Mazama	Zedor
Blackjack	Merlot	
Bluebank	Midnight	

Table 3: The following fine fescue cultivars performed well in full-sun tests conducted between 2014 and 2016, with particular attention to 2016 data. Not all of these cultivars will be available in 2017.

Cascade	Minimus	RAD-FC44
Kent	Navigator II	RAD-FR47
Marvel	Radar	