

## Smith Seed Forages Get Top Scores



Smith Seed's forage program is far from being the largest, but we are grateful to offer some of the best performing varieties. Take for instance orchardgrasses. The University of Kentucky recently published their "2007 Long-Term Summary of Kentucky Forage Variety Trials." In this publication, UK researchers listed orchardgrass yields for 3 locations over a course of 4+ years (one location had 5 years of data), and then averaged each entry's yields by the number of locations and years for each entry. Do you know which two varieties had the highest mean scores? If you guessed Persist and Takena II, you are correct.

Similar observations are being reported on our ryegrasses. Big Boss tetraploid annual lead 17 other entries for the 3-year dry matter mean score in Louisiana. Ed, our diploid annual continues to get top marks in states like Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Texas, and Georgia. The same is true for our tetraploids, Verdure and Attain.

While supplies on some of our forages are limited, especially this year, we highlight these varieties for two reasons: To those of you who are helping us sell all we can produce -thank you. To the rest of you, please keep watching our program grow and join the others who are experiencing more growth and profit, as well as increased return business from including Smith Seed forage proprietaries. To learn more contact us or visit [www.smithseed.com/seed/forage](http://www.smithseed.com/seed/forage).



## Quality Landscaping Helps Sell Houses for More \$\$\$

Forgive the obvious, but it is sometimes helpful to remind each other of useful marketing tools. One of ours is the value of the end product. This is especially true when we see large negatives that can make us act like deer in the headlights. Sure, we all sell seed and we all are concerned that the slowdown of the economy, especially the housing market is going to directly affect us. We all see contractors and housing developers tighten their belts, slow their building activity down, and look for ways to save money. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that a reduction in new home construction means a reduction in new lawns. But do we have to just sit there and watch? Probably not.

Have you noticed one consistent fact about the houses that ARE selling? Is there something about their landscaping quality that might be a factor? According to numerous studies, the actual value of new homes with more sophisticated landscape designs is 10-15% greater than those with just a basic lawn and walkway. This holds true for existing homes as well. Increase in value is particularly important when the market is flat, as it gives the seller a preferred look for the same price. In fact, the data shows that the "perceived increased value" or "curb appeal" is actually much higher than 15%. That is REALLY important when the market has too many houses.



So, while most of us don't sell plants or landscaping services, our seeds are the very basis for the lawns that these sophisticated landscape designs are built upon. In other words, it is to our benefit to promote nice landscape designs. As you discuss this fact with your staff and customers you will find some creative ways to involve yourselves in promoting "great landscape and great lawns." One way would be to look for customers who are targeting higher end services, as well as encourage your more "basic contractors" to improve their service options. For more information, visit [www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-087/426-087](http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-087/426-087) and other similar articles.