

# Top turfgrass breeder combines art, science

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

Pure-Seed Testing develops turfgrasses and forages that solve problems and meet needs.

Crystal Rose-Fricker, the president of Pure Seed and Pure-Seed Testing Inc., and has developed or co-developed more than 320 turf and forage grass cultivars.

The renowned grass seed geneticist has made her mark in research and breeding for more than 30 years, earning the Genetics and Plant Breeding Award from the National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders.

She was also listed No. 6 in Sports Illustrated's list of the "Most Influential Women in Golf."

Rose-Fricker operates from the heart of a fully integrated family business that her father, Bill Rose, started in 1970. The third generation is now involved, and the family's network of companies include PST for the research and testing; Pure Seed, marketing and services; and Roselawn, the production arm headed by her brother, Ed Rose.

Pure Seed has offices in Canby, Ore., and North Carolina for further turfgrass research evaluations and utilizes testing facilities around the world.

"We currently have about 25 species and are doing research for 10 years down the road," Rose-Fricker said.

"We work on a lot of differ-



**Crystal Rose-Fricker examines the roots of a Kentucky Bluegrass in a salt study trial. Their Seeded Paspalum Pure Dynasty can be irrigated with ocean water and is widely used in the Middle East.**

ent traits, and drought tolerance is one of the exciting ones," she said. "We have varieties that give all the benefits of grass using less water."

Pure Seed's Seeded Paspalum Pure Dynasty can be irrigated with ocean water and is widely used in the Middle East.

Pure Seed also has a grass seed coating program that coats the grass seed in a water-absorbent polymer to increase germination while requiring less water.

COVID-19 has the company scrambling to meet demands from several sectors, starting with the

reinvigorated golf industry.

"People are realizing how important golf is and that it's a safe way to get outdoors," Rose-Fricker said.

In the U.S., golf courses are calling for more seed to keep up with increased traffic, and

homeowners are upgrading their environs.

"I think people have tended to take grass for granted," Rose-Fricker said.

"They don't realize how it lowers the temperature, turns carbon dioxide into oxygen, controls erosion and makes an amazing filter."

"In studies around suburbs, when rain washes chemicals and impurities down the roads, it comes out cleaner where it passes through a golf course," she

said.

"There's a lot of science involved, but this work is also an art," Rose-Fricker said. "The grass you grow on your lawn is always mowed but we have to look at these plants in the springtime when they start heading."

"We get to use God's creation to find the best plants with traits we need to make a difference in the environment today and for the future," Rose-Fricker said. "That's why I call it a treasure hunt."



**Crystal Rose-Fricker is president of Pure-Seed Testing.**

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