

Look at wheat, barley variety performance

NEWARK, Del. — The first step in preparing for fall seeding of wheat and barley is to look at the varieties that are available, notes Delaware Extension crops specialist Frank Webb.

The standard barley varieties are still holding up well in variety trials at the University of Delaware Georgetown Substation. Henry is still one of the best varieties. Maury is another good variety that matures several days later. Surry is yet another good one with a growing season a bit shorter than Henry's.

Some other varieties did not perform as well in the trials. Rapidan is rapidly losing favor because of its disease susceptibility and low yields. McNair 601 happened to yield well this year, but this release seems quite variable in its susceptibility to various diseases. Some years it has yielded very poorly. Webb recommends steering clear of any variety that is so variable.

While there don't seem to be many new barley varieties on the horizon, there are quite a few new wheat varieties coming along. In addition, standard wheat varieties like Abe and Potomac are continuing to perform well in the trials.

McNair 1003 is a high-yielding wheat variety that gained a lot of acreage in Delaware last year. One problem with this one, though, is its low test weight. Millers have been complaining about the quality of the flour made from this grain, so some elevators are refusing to accept it. Farmers who plan to grow McNair 1003 should be sure to check first with a grain elevator to make sure there's a market for it.

Coker 747 yielded fairly well this year, as it has in the past, although it is still a bit variable in its disease susceptibility. A newer Coker variety, 762, also yielded fairly well. It doesn't appear to be any better than 747, but some farmers may want to try it just to broaden

their variety base as a protection against disease losses.

Tyler and Wheeler are two new wheat varieties released last year by Virginia. Yields and disease resistance look promising so far but both varieties are a little shy in test weight, just on the borderline of acceptability. Seed is still in short supply on these new releases, but farmers who can get it may want to see how well Wheeler and Tyler perform on their particular farm.

Maryland has just released a new variety called Severn that is performing well on test. None of the seed is available this year except to certified seed growers. Having new varieties like this one waiting in the wings can help foil disease organisms, which are the major cause of yield reduction in small grains. Scientists at the University of Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service are working toward better control

as well as higher yields to justify the cost of fungicide applications.

The researchers have also been looking at no-tillage wheat and barley production for the past two years. The results have been quite encouraging, but they've learned that no-till small grains must be grown according to a specific recipe. Most important, small grains cannot be planted in rows wider than ten inches. That probably means it's necessary to use a no-till drill, which should be properly set for accurate seed drop and depth.

The researchers have also found that it's important to apply a vegetative desiccant such as Paraquat after planting to no-till barley or wheat. This is especially important after planting barley since it is usually planted earlier. When small grains are planted, winter annuals such as henbit, chickweed and German moss are still small enough to be overlooked, and a farmer may feel that

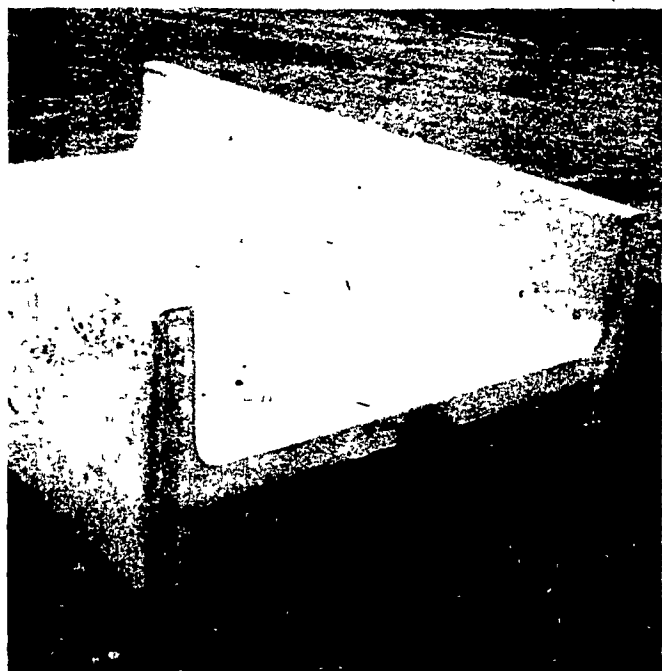
Paraquat isn't necessary. However, cool autumn weather and good moisture later in the growing season cause these weeds to grow rapidly and only then does the grower realize a mistake has been made. In two years of tests at the Georgetown Substation, the application of Paraquat after planting resulted in yields almost twice as high as those on untreated plots.

The application of Paraquat at planting does not take the place of 2,4-D or Banvel in the spring, Webb notes.

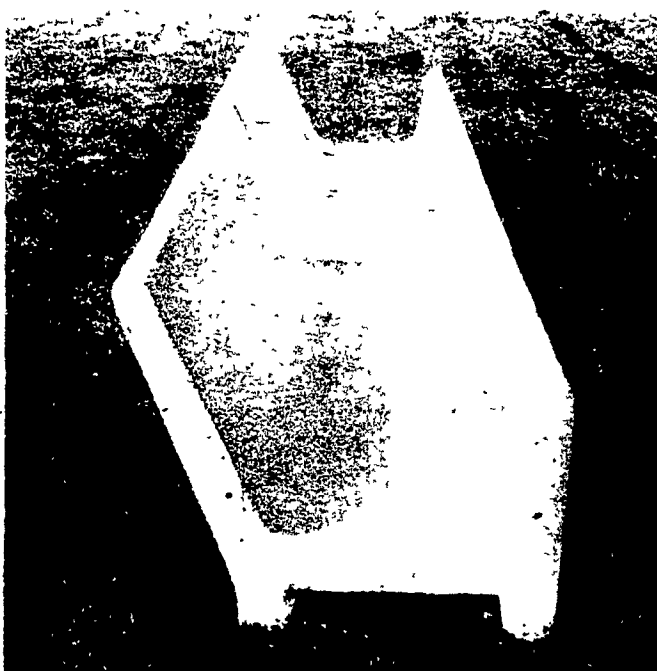
University of Delaware studies show that no-tillage wheat and barley can yield as well or better than conventional. But the consistency of yield has not really been proven yet, so studies are continuing.

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Gardens recycle water supply

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Household washwater doesn't have to go down the drain. It can be recycled directly into the home vegetable and flower garden through a "greywater" system.

With drought plaguing many parts of the country and long-term weather patterns increasingly in question, gardeners are beginning to look at the advantages of piping water directly from showers, bathtubs and washwater drains into their gardens.

According to the Gardens for All News, membership publications of the nonprofit National Association for Gardenings, greywater does not require extensive chemical or biological treatment before it can be used in the garden as irrigation. One square foot of loamy garden soil can handle a half gallon of waste water per week.

Some precautions must be taken, however with substances like grease and detergents heavy in sodium salts.

Jack Robinson, president of Gardens for All, commented, "It's estimated that in 1978 each American used an average of 200 gallons of water a day, with 70 percent going into shower, bath and toilet use. We're now realizing we don't have endless supplies in all parts of the country, and use of greywater recognizes in fact."

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