

**Media Release – Wednesday, March 16, 2016**

## Just what is genuine Sir Walter and where can you buy it?

Sir Walter is a variety of what is commonly known in Australia as Soft Leaf Buffalo or St Augustine Grass (*Stenotaphrum Secundatum*).

It is a Warm Season turfgrass that was selected and developed in the Hunter region of the NSW Coastline some 20 years ago by Mr Brent Redman and carries Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) Protection until March 2018.

It is undoubtedly the most successful commercial turfgrass variety in Australia with over 60 Million square metres having been sold over this time to around half a million Australian homes.

Such success, however has unfortunately come with some unintended consequences. There has been ongoing attempts over the years by some elements in the industry trying to copy, pass-off and blatantly deceive prospective purchasers of Sir Walter with imitations, substitutions or knock-offs of the genuine Sir Walter variety.

There have been many hundreds of PBR breach notices issued over the years to such dodgy operators, with one even charged in the NSW Supreme Court with fair trading breaches that related to substituting Sir Walter with non-genuine Sir Walter buffalo and even Kikuyu grass types.

With the introduction of the new Lawn Solutions Australia (LSA) national growers' group and Sir Walter coming under the management of this group there has been further scientific and breeding development work around the country to ensure the genetic integrity of this variety being offered to the Australian market moving forward.

Sports Turf Research Institute has recently been commissioned by LSA to carry out DNA testing on LSA member's Sir Walter with tests coming back that indicate all LSA Member Growers' Sir Walter matches DNA testing of 15 years ago and can be properly called 'true-to-type Sir Walter' or what has been newly trademarked by the Lawn Solutions Group as Sir Walter DNA Certified.

Other strict growing and quality assurance protocols have also been introduced to the Lawn Solutions Australia group to further ensure the integrity of Sir Walter DNA Certified.

The newly introduced independent Australian Genetic Assurance Program (AusGAP) turf accreditation and certification process has been adopted by Lawn Solutions Australia and is being currently rolled out to all members with full certification anticipated for all growers by mid-2017.

AusGAP covers not just the genetic integrity of Sir Walter DNA Certified but also the whole gamut of turf production and business operations for certified growers.

This process aims to achieve an added level of protection help assure that all turf varieties produced under the Lawn Solutions Australia banner meet the strict AusGAP accreditation protocols and ultimately ensure that the customer and end-user gets what they were originally after, including Lawn Solutions Australia's 10-year-product warranty.

Sir Walter will still be available from a number of non-Lawn Solutions Australia growers for some time to come and these growers can be contacted individually to determine the integrity or quality assurance measures they place around their own turf production processes.



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