

# TurfComms



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**PURPOSE:** To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

## A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

**PRACTICAL GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE - The Magic of Greenkeeping, by Gordon Witteveen and Michael Bavier:** This is an excellent book for: superintendent's wife, green chairman, manager, new members of the staff, and students. It is not a great selection for experienced superintendents although there maybe things of interest such as their list of the seven deadly sins and the seven venial sins. It is a text that does an excellent job of explaining chapter by chapter how the superintendent goes about maintaining a better than average golf course.

I dog-eared 6 pages for comments or future reference. These six included the only error I found on pg. 177. Here they mistakenly note that the male ginkgo has an odor problem; when it is the fruit of the female that truly is a problem. A well done book by two of your fellow superintendents. Buy a copy for the spouse so she can better appreciate what you are doing each day. This new release can be ordered through GCSAA or autographed copies are available direct from the authors for \$35.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping. Simply contact Michael Bavier at 434 Valencia Ave., Barrington, IL 600610, home phone is (847) 382-7654, fax (847) 358-0092, and e-mail: magicgrkp@aol.com.

Although the authors have done a lot of traveling their cool season approach to golf course maintenance will make the book slightly better appreciated by northern superintendents.

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**TEXAS TURF CONFERENCE:** The 14th - 16th of December found me driving back and forth to Ft. Worth in rush hour traffic to attend this conference. I mentioned in the last issue about being impressed with the seeded bermudagrass cultivar **Princess**. Well, it was first in **Dr. Richard White's** ranking of seeded bermudagrasses in his test. The only one that was statistically an improvement quality-wise over common.

He also noted that **Barricade** worked well for *Poa annua* control in perennial ryegrass overseedings of bermudagrass. He also claims to have a new secret experimental that controls **bahiagrass**. Research there at TX A & M has found nitrate runoff well below EPA requirements but phosphorus is often above the 1 ppm recommended level in turf runoff.

**Dr. Engelke** told us the TX Field Day in '99 at Dallas would most likely be Sept. 30th or close to it. **Dr. Colbaugh** talked about "stopped up" greens; a theme that we would hear more about as the Conference progressed. Dr. Colbaugh by the way is collecting and identifying fairy ring mushroom. So if you have any mushrooms in your fairy rings send to Dr. Colbaugh and tell them where they came from. He has so far found a puff ball type that stops grass seed germination. He has found that injecting Prostar or Heritage gives longer and better control of **fairy ring** than normal applications.

**Dr. Reinert** mentioned that a hybrid between *Poa pratensis* and *Poa arachnifera* (Ky bluegr. and TX bluegr.) has been released. It is called Revielle. It will stay green year round. Tolerates mowing down to two inches, has excellent drought tolerance, a rhizome producer, some shade tolerance - maybe as much as St. Augustine. Adapted to OK and Texas at least. It also has good army worm and grub resistance. It does not have salt tolerance.

**Dr. Coleman Ward** gave a talk titled: Staying on the Cutting Edge of Turfgrass in the 21st Century. He predicted in 10 years 80% of a **superintendent's job** would be people and paper management. I would say many of you feel you are there now. He felt justified in saying that if the maintenance budget exceeds \$500,000 you should have a **secretary**. Now if we could get upper management to create and fund properly such a position. Such does seem much more common when the budget approaches one million.

He was strongly in favor of superintendents having a consultant. But perhaps that is partly because he is one. He did note that a **consultant** should be experienced and not product oriented.

He spoke briefly of **zeolites** and their ability to hold nitrogen and potassium. But had one report of damage to L-93. He noted that the average number of months from ground breaking of a **new golf course** to opening was 21.5 months. And that the estimated cost of maintaining 18 holes from completion to opening date was 1/4 million. Average age of the beginning golfer is 27. Average **Stimpmeter** reading at clubs which hold PGA events is 8.9 feet.

A greens mix amended with **compost** grows in faster, BUT, what does it do in long term. He is worried about plugging (stopped-up) of greens mixes.

Mr. Pat O'Brien, S.E. agronomist - USGA, noted that plant breeders were going away from dark green leaf color because of the higher leaf temperature involved. He discussed briefly the new **Seashore paspalums** being released in 1999. AP-10 a putting green strain (withstands 1/8 inch)



and FWY-1 an upright cultivar with a dense stand for 1/2 inch mowing. He noted that the paspalums responded to calcium nitrate, have a seedhead problem, and have no shade tolerance. If you don't wish to wait for the above selections you can currently purchase other seashore paspalum selections from: Eco Shores - 904-767-6232; Woerneu Sports of Georgia - 800-841-6413; and Environmental Turf Solutions - I didn't write fast enough to get this last number.

He then went on to some of the new bermudagrass selections. **TifSport**, the new name for Tifton 94, has excellent cold tolerance and uses about 50% less nitrogen than 419. **GN-1**, the Greg Norman selection is a common type with intermediate leaf texture between common and 419. It is very stoloniferous, he observed that it scalps excessively at 3/8 inch, has good color, and is difficult to overseed. It may experience summer chlorosis which is a phosphorus deficiency in this case. He thought it would be an excellent candidate for driving range tees because of its aggressive stolon growth.

**Baby** he noted has excellent cold tolerance and is suitable for tees and fairways. He said Southern Hills was planning to use it on tees. He felt strongly that **Tifton 10** needs to be looked at closely for rough use. He claims it is cold tolerant to -20°F, produces very little vertical growth - thus requires less mowing, and only needs two pounds of N/M/year. He says its blue-green color allows it to provide you with a good contrast. He noted in North Texas that it was sold by Trinity Turf.

He then briefly covered the new ultra-dwarfs; noting that the Champion people had set a new standard with their very heavy sprigging rates. He said heating in piles of spriggs was a serious problem and that one solution was to shrink wrap the sprigs creating anaerobic conditions. This reducing heating for up to 7 days. He then mentioned that *Poa nimeralis* from Seed Research comes up well in the ultradwarfs as an overseeding. (Ed. most growers of Champion are seeding now with *Poa trivialis*.)

**Larry Gilhuly**, USGA agronomist from the Northwest, explained why that area favored *Poa annua* greens. Not only are the mild, wet winters ideal for the grass but the summers are relatively mild with low humidity. Therefore the *Poa* is never stressed. He says bentgrass doesn't have a chance against the *Poa* competition. He encourages superintendents when rebuilding a green in a set of old *Poa*/bent greens to establish the new green with plugs from the old greens. That way the new green quickly becomes like the others.

He noted that **fairway topdressing** has become a relatively common practice in his area at some of the better golf courses. Cost - \$50 to \$100 thousand/year. They are apply 6 - 8 yd<sup>3</sup>/acre at 4 to 6 week intervals. Some are even doing the rough and surrounds. An extra cost after a few years is having to raise the irrigation heads.

Mr. Gilhuly also covers Hawaii for the Green Section. On that basis he covered his experiences with **seashore paspalum**. No grain, very upright, pennywort main weed, other weeds choked out. Better wear tolerance than bermudagrass. Is extremely aggressive, thatchy, providing a soft and bumpy surface on greens if fertilized at bermudagrass rates. Need to cut nitrogen 1/3 or more; he suggested 3 lb. N/M/year, with no more than 1/2 lb. N/application. There can be some

color variation and Dollar Spot can be problems. He says seashore paspalum is not liked in Hawaii by the superintendents but he feels it is great.

**Dr. Coleman Ward** spoke on Why Sand-based Golf Greens Decline. He opened with, "A properly constructed and managed USGA green should never have to be rebuilt." He then pointed out that they typically fail because organic matter clogs up macro pore space in the upper three inches. Therefore, he went on to say decline is caused by inappropriate management practices which do not allow sufficient gas (air) exchange in the surface 3 inches of the soil. He feels that it is not lack of oxygen but the build up of toxic gasses such as: ethylene, methane, hydrogen cyanide, and butyric acid along with low pH toxicities of Al and Mn that cause the decline.

He commented on the SubAir, noting that it can change oxygen level, pull out water and thus open up pore space. However, the effect he said is not as dramatic as advertised.

Another thing that can seal off the surface is blue-green algae. Manozeb with  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})_2$  kills the algae. (ed. Be careful with how much CuOH you use on old *Poa annua* greens. Copper is toxic to Poa.)

The Conference ended with a panel of USGA agronomist. Some of the things of interest mentioned were: Aliette and Fore - kills *Poa trivialis* (also Sentinel and Eagle reported to do the same). Fore™ may damage Crenshaw (Ed. This has not happened at one of the courses I consult for in the Dallas area). **Crumb rubber** does not work in wet areas - does work with bermudagrass giving increased traffic resistance. *Poa trivialis* is a very big seed contaminate in Washington State grown seed, even in certified seed, said **Dr. Eric Miltner**, of Washington State U.,

**NEW YORK CITY PESTICIDE USE MAKES Dallas Morning News:** According to this NY Times News Service release on pg. 70A of the Nov. 26th issue Manhattan ranked first in the State in amount of liquid pesticides used based upon 1997 data. What is more over 90% of the pesticides used were neurotoxins. It appears New Yorkers may not want farmers using pesticides on the food they eat but when it comes to controlling cockroaches they will gladly load their homes, restaurants, and businesses with pesticides.

Of course one must take this whole news release with a grain of salt. The NY Times doesn't have a great reputation for scientific reporting and two items in this two column article indicate this might be the case here. The article has an exterminator saying "his employees now just use a gallon or two of herbicide to kill pest in 30 apartments." Underlining is mine. Also a Dr. Marion Moss, an opponent of pesticides, is quoted as getting rid of roaches in her apartments with nontoxic poisons, among other things she used. Underlining is mine. One can assume she meant nontoxic to humans but *The dose makes the poison*.

**VINES:** The Avant Gardener has a special recent issue (V.30, No.12) on this subject. A well selected vine can beautify a fence, wall, or help hide some other structure where there is minimal room to plant a shrub or tree screen. Got such a site, give this issue a look at. The next issue (V. 31, No.1) has more but I'll add here only a suggested text: William Mulligan's 1995, **The Lattice Gardener**.

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