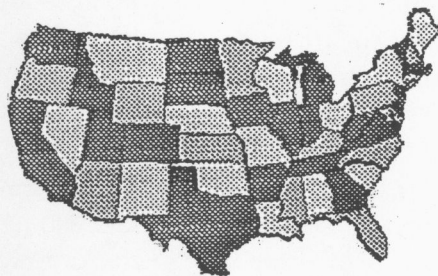


TurfComms



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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.

TEXAS TURFGRASS CONF. Dec. 2003

Fire Ant Activity by Dr. James Reinert, TX A & M This was a report on a study of how fire ants responded to height of cut, irrigation and grass species and cultivars. The study was based on observations made over the linear gradient irrigation system. The heights of cut were ½, 1, and 2 inches. Fire ants were most numerous under no irrigation and least where irrigation meet or exceeded evapotranspiration. Fire ants were most numerous at the two inch heights of cut and least at the ½ inch of cut. The fire ants preferred open turf like provided by buffalo grass or some of the zoysia cultivars in this trial. They did not like the denser bermudagrass cultivars.

Dear Milt, What about taking plugs from the fairy ring areas of greens and growing out the mushrooms?

Dr. Phil Colbaugh talked on Fairy Ring and Cyanobacteria (aka the blue-green algae). As I have reported on this before I will mention only one thing I had not heard before and that in some cases the yellow spots on greens were caused by the Cyanobacteria which are climbing the leaf blades and appear to be invading the turf through the hydrotode.

Irrigation Quality: Mike Huck gave an excellent talk on this subject which covered about one semester credit hour of material in 45 minutes. Some figures I don't remember seeing elsewhere are: 350 ppm chlorides cause root toxicity. 106 ppm causes foliage toxicity. 90 ppm bicarbonate causes foliar damage to ornamentals.

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Complacency Regarding Water is NOT an Option: Uniting the Texas Turf Industry to Address What's Ahead was the title of the talk given by Dr. Richard White. I think Dr. White made his point as to why the turf industry needs to unite regarding water regulations that are coming. But, I don't think he sold his audience. Too bad because he is correct the conception of the turf industry as being a big water user and waster of water is out there with many of the people concerned with reducing water use before we run out.

One example of how astray they are that he gave was considering artificial turf use as a water conservation method. Another was that the City of El Paso had established a tree board to establish a canopy of tree cover over the City to conserve water. (Ed. Somebody needs to tell the City of El Paso that trees use even more water than turf.)

The Turf Industry does need to stay awake about water use issues!

Jeff Brauer discussed the need for master plans and pointed out how the superintendent fit in those plans. He stressed the importance of communication especially once any renovation begins. Also the need for the budget to be 1.5 to 2 times more than routine the first year of maintenance after renovation. (Ed. Any body ever seen a budget that was two times larger for the first year after a major renovation? One and a half times larger?) (Ed. I have seen one smaller because the club suddenly realized they had lost members and had more debt.)

Sulfonylurea Herbicides was the subject of a talk by John Boyd, U. of Ark. He can be reached for more details at (501) 671-2224 or jboyd@uaex.edu. He made what I thought was an interesting point for the future development of herbicides. He said that Roundup at \$14/gallon and the availability of Roundup resistant crops has shot down the chemical industry's desire to spend money of researching new herbicides for crops and that is where the new turf herbicides come from. So these sulfonyurea herbicides may be the last new herbicides we see for a very long time.

This was another of those interesting talks that covered too much material too thoroughly in too short a time. The highlights for me were: They are safe on bermudagrasses, reasonably safe on zoysias, centipede has some problems, and bahiagrass even more problems with these compounds.

For perennial ryegrass removal the bermudagrass should be actually growing when using these materials. **Tranzit**, **Katana**, and **Revolver** work best. Need about 42 days to get full control. Roundup takes 2 weeks.

For purple nutsedge control with these products you need two applications 6 to 8 weeks apart.

Monument in addition to controlling cool season grasses also gives fair control of Virginia buttonweed and some control of Kyllinga.

Katana is the best of these for tall fescue control.

The higher the pH the more active the sulfonylureas are.

Keith Ihms a Dallas Superintendent discussed converting his old bermudagrass fairways to **TifSport**. If I remember correctly he used a combination of Roundup and Fusilade. He made a first application Sept. 17th and wished he had made it sooner. He scalped a couple of weeks later and made a second application Oct. 14. With hind sight he wishes he could have started earlier and got in a third application. He sprayed Ronstar before sprigging.

Ken Gorzyski, an Austin Superintendent discussed the careful examination of his putting greens mix to find out why it wasn't draining properly. He found what a lot of superintendents will find if they have **old USGA type constructed greens** that were properly constructed but perhaps not so properly maintained.

The profile on these greens above the gravel layer had three distinct layers color wise. An upper layer that appeared to be high in organic matter. A middle layer that appeared to be the original sand color of the original mix. And a gray layer above the gravel.

The bottom gray layer was gray because of a lack of air movement through the profile solely due to the poor air movement through the top layer, combined with perched water over the gravel. The gravel layer when tested with a hose drained fine.

The middle layer meet USGA recommendations.

The top layer had no macropores, or large pores through which air moves; the mix was all capillary pore space. It wasn't too far off from the original mix but did contain twice as much silt and clay as the original. A lot more organic matter and some more of the very fine sand. They hope a program of deep aerification and filling holes with sand will restore the greens.

Charles Joachim, a Houston Superintendent discussed how he **aerified greens** to minimize golfer frustration. His course has 36 holes but 1008 golfing members. New members must have a handicap of 15 or less. 455 members have single digit handicaps. He is on a thatch prevention management program with frequent aerification. His program is:

1. fertilize 2 to 3 days before aerification.
2. verticut before aerification and mow.
3. uses a Graden on 2 inch centers.
4. Topdresses before aerification, mainly to avoid tire tracks.
5. Uses a CoreMaster, ¼ inch tine with ½ x 1 inch spacing.
6. rather than drag mat he blows sand in.
7. then he rolls.

Bud White the Mid-Continent USGA agronomist discussed the worst problems he encountered this year. Excess rain had black layer at the top of the list. Also lots of Fairy Ring and Take-all Patch. Summer Crown Rot on bentgrass greens was diagnosed as a combination of Take-all Patch and Summer Patch. A little added nitrogen and magnesium did appear to result in improvement for this last problem.

Jim Moore, Dir. of Construction Education for the USGA Green Section, who I will now nick name **The Shadow** discussed the proposed revisions to the **Guidelines for Putting Green Construction**. To summarize the changes I would say from listening closely to Jim they will be relatively few and of a minor nature and to be finalized Feb. 2004. More interesting to me were some of the remarks he made discussing the ideas that were kicked around by the committee and some of his thoughts.

1. Larger surface area is needed on greens because of quicker speeds (Ed. also of course reduction of surface undulations). 2. Fifteen foot spacing between drainlines is not needed but guidelines will not change. 3. If you must leave something out of the mix to save money leave out the organic matter. Yes, it will make it hard to manage the first year but not after that. 4. Air injection or suction is of a benefit only if used all the time. 5. Flat pipe can work but it is very sensitive to undulations and thus will probably not save money. 6. The USGA will allow inorganic amendments but he says you can't justify them economically.

I agree with all the above comments. **The Shadow** nick name is because Jim is a shadow of what he was two years ago when I saw him last. He has lost 72 pounds. Congratulations Jim!

Dr. Milt Engelke discussed new Bentgrass Cultivars. He first pointed out the broad genetic base that went in to the cultivar Penncross compared to the new cultivars which he called niche cultivars. They are great for certain environments but not all environments. They do not have Penncross's wide adaptation. You need to know the weaknesses of the cultivar you select. You will need to practice topdressing on a regular basis to dilute the organic matter that accumulates. The new cultivars are 'designed' to grow during the summer and will need added nitrogen at that time.

Dr. David Chalmers discussed the new seeded bermudagrasses. He noted that all seeded types are prone to winter kill the first winter. Seeding earlier in the summer is beneficial in that it lessens this tendency. The cultivar Riviera is generally considered the most cold tolerant. Princess is generally considered the cultivar with the best summer density but has poor winter tolerance and is slow to greenup. These two cultivars have good divot recovery and unless winter kill is a factor to consider Princess has a slight edge over Riviera of the seeded cultivars and these two tend to be the best of the current lot.

He then compared the seeded cultivars to vegetative selections. On divot recovery GN-1 is best (Ed. Excellent for practice tees.)

End