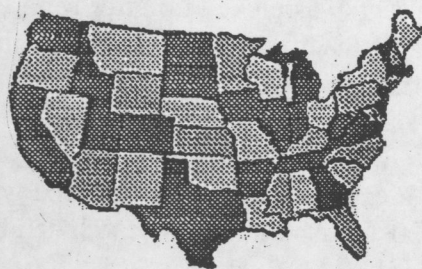


TurfComms



V. 15, I.1

Oct. 26, 2003

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

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE: I guess I'm back in their good graces. Got a note: "Please keep sending TurfComms." With the note came a half dozen recent magazines which I will comment on below using GM for the magazine and the month, and page. They are all 2003.

NFL Players Prefer Grass Surfaces: One of the five best fields according to the players was Seattle's Seahawk Stadium, "a Field Turf playing surface. Also, five of the ten worst fields were natural turf, BOO! GM, March, pg. 6.

Zoysiagrass Water Relations: A summary of the work done at TX A&M at Dallas ten years ago evaluating zoysia cultivars and Texas selections. This research does point out the wide variation in drought tolerance in the zoysias but does not include many of the new releases. GM, August, G6.

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Mangaging the New 'Alpha'-Bents: A comparison of Penn States new A and G series bentgrasses with Penncross by U. of Wisconsin's John Stier. More specifically, looking at A-4 and G-2. Using a topdressing sand that met USGA requirements ("the majority of the sand particles were of medium size, with much smaller fractions of coarse and fine materials.) he reported very little of the sand was picked up after topdressing in the next day's mowing. 2.8% from A-4 plots and 1.8% from either G-2 or Penncross plots. He "brushed the topdressing into the turf, then irrigated to replace the estimated daily water loss (ET)."

He does go on to report other results. Please remember the research was probably carried out under Madison, Wis. conditions. I also wish that the research had been carried out for more than two years. GM, August, G1.

Urban smog: Researchers in New Zealand have pointed out that the organic chemicals that give us that nice mowed-grass-smell "are highly reactive, are potent precursors of ozone and in urban areas will contribute to the formation of photochemical smog." Wow, must we now stop mowing? Stay tuned! GM, May, pg. 8.

Ground Pearls: The article's title was Don't Give up on Ground Pearls, GM, April, C8 but the results from NC State Univ. was not very promising. I've only positively identified this pest 3 times. The waxy coating of this mite and its occurrence up to 12 inches down in the soil make it almost impossible to kill. Some success with imidacloprid (Merit), a horticultural oil, and wetting agent applied twice a year has been reported in Australia. N.C. researchers did get some turf improvement from this treatment, but, they were not able to document a reduction in the number of ground pearls in the soil.

Soil testing: This was a reader poll GM, April, pg. 12. Nine percent of those responding did soil testing only if the client requested it; and 11% never did it. Twenty percent of those responding to the poll should not consider themselves professional grounds-care people in my opinion. And the 20% that did it only "occasionally, if turf appears stressed," should hang their heads.

Top Soil: This is an interesting comparison of **USGA profile vs. California style** putting green construction and the amendments **Profile** and **ZeoPro**. The Missouri researchers found a lot of small, but significant, differences between the various treatments, and they finish with a cost comparison. Very interesting reading for someone about to build new greens. GM, June, G1.

Penncross: "historically this durable plant has been the standard by which all other varieties of creeping bentgrass have been measured." Boy, that line makes me feel real old. Penncross was released in 1954. It did catch on fast and quickly become accepted as the best of the seeded bentgrasses. It has been the standard by which the new

cultivars are evaluated; but that adverb "historically" is a little too much for somebody born in 1935. This appeared in Resistance is (not) Futile, GM March, G2. This article compares disease resistance of some of the new cultivars with each other and Penncross.

Fertilizer/Pesticide Combinations: By the long list of such products it is obvious the industry is still using them; although mostly herbicide or insecticide combinations. It was strange to read such a list and not see O.M. Scotts products. Back in the days ('78-'84) when I was visiting golf courses for the USGA O.M. Scotts had that market covered.

Combination products can be labor savers but they sure do lock in your program and I hated to see superintendents lose flexibility. Most of those superintendents didn't own a sprayer. GM, April, pg. 28.

Is turf really a non-point source polluter? This is the sub-title of an article written By Dr. Stier of the U. of Wisconsin reporting, at least in part, on their recent research on the subject. The answer to the question is generally no, but for particulars read the article or some of the prior works funded by the USGA Green Section. GM, March, pg. C2.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE should be one of the four journals golf course superintendents subscribe to and read.

DARTMOUTH, MASS: Spent almost two weeks there this summer and much of it doing gardening and lawn maintenance on my mother's yard. It was the end of Sept. and I was looking at common chickweed and annual bluegrass already in flower growing along side crabgrass in seed. But, it was fun to be pulling weeds with no bermudagrass in a loamy sand.

It was probably my next to last visit to the town of my birth and the last to the old homestead that my mother was born in. We had to put my mother in a nursing home and the house will therefore be sold. The second sad visit/trip of the summer. Wooden pegs hold the rafters together in this old house. My grandfather had dug the cellar after he moved in during the very early 1900s. The floor boards are old white pine with thin wooden strips between the 12 inch wide boards. The only bathroom is a converted closet (5'3" x 5'10"). My motor home bathroom is 3'1" x 5'5". So the old bathroom wasn't impossibly small it just felt that way at times.

ASHS Centennial Conf., Providence, R.I.: October 3 - 6th found me here an hour's drive from my old home town. A poster on **Greensand** made my first day. I've seen this recommended by a fair number of natural organic practitioners as a potassium source. According to this poster it does contain 6% potassium; but the writer claims that is not very available. The authors from Rutgers Univ. claim it is the phosphorus in the material that provides the most benefit to plants. For a small book on the subject call 1-732-932-9762 and ask for publication E279, Greensand and Greensand soils of N.J.: a review by Dr. John Tedrow. Cost is \$10.

Zoysia and Nitrogen: I sometimes wonder if researchers do a literature review before they decide to do research or if they are just looking for an easy paper that will get them some results and thus a paid trip to the national conference. A couple of Hawaiian researchers reported that Common Bermuda, wild Bermuda and Seashore Paspalum responded to increased nitrogen levels while three zoysias did not. Whoop! Whoop! That may be research but the results could have been predicted by reading the literature.

Bio-Derived Energy Sources for protected Horticulture – Colloquium 1: I learned during this afternoon session that there were a lot of municipal landfills that could be tapped for natural gas production. Apparently after the landfill is capped it is good for 15 to 20 years of natural gas production. If you separate the CO₂ from the methane you can use the CO₂ to stimulate plant growth while using the methane for electricity production. I did come to the conclusion that this is not an overly practical solution to energy needs and current fossil fuel price levels. In fact, it was made clear that current conversions of biomass to electricity was about three times more expensive than using fossil fuels.

One of the presenters was high on fuel cells as he thought they would be practical for horticultural use in less than ten years as their cost decreases. For more information of this go to <http://www.bee.cornell.edu/sustain/fuelcell/index.htm>. Manure isn't the best fuel source for such cells as the hydrogen sulfide must be scrubbed out.

Contributions of Genetics and Genomics to Human Nutrition – Colloquium 2: The first speaker talked about the world wide nutrition problem as he saw it. He felt most of the problems were due to over population and occurred in the developing nations. Two of the other contributing factors he gave were: 1. the graying of the population, and 2, stagnating food yields with a loss of diversity.

He noted that caloric intake in the developing nations has actually increased some, due to increased production of grains. But, this had been offset by an increase in what was labeled sub-chronic nutrition. This appeared to be deficiencies in minor elements and vitamins and was a result of the loss of diversity in the diet. This condition had improved some in China but grown worse in Africa.

There is a need to increase the amounts of pulses (legumes), fruits, and vegetables in developing nations. He also was quick to tell us that there was no panacea for world food problems. {Ed. After listening to him I would say that there was a severe need for an increase in education in these developing nations.}

The second speaker made us aware of the U.S.'s changing evaluation of food sources over the last 25 years. This has gone from an emphasis on basic nutrition to an emphasis on cancer fighting compounds and the benefits of fiber, etc. (to be continued)

END