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BETTER LAWN

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BETTER LAWN & TURF INSTITUTE—



Harvests

2233 GRAND AVENUE • KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

April 16, 1957

BUSY SPRING SEASON

(1) Newspaper Series:

It's been a very busy spring season at the Institute's offices but we are happy to report encouraging results.

The lawn series went out early and the clippings returned thus far indicate they are being well received. Because of rising costs, space has become a big problem with newspapers and magazines so the articles in the series were written short and many editors commented favorably upon this. A number of newspapers asked for glossy photographs with which to illustrate the articles and these were made to fit the current material and to provide us with an additional photographic supply for future use. We are getting a fairly representative collection of photographs for use in filling requests from editors.

The newspaper series were supplied in mat form and also on slick paper in order to make them suitable for direct reproduction in plants using offset equipment.

(2) Brochure is ready:

Our brochure "Quality Turf Grasses" submitted to the directors during the Chicago meeting has been revised and will be turned over to the lithographers this week. The Institute executive committee decided it would be ten times more effective if it reached the trade early in August rather than in the spring. The attractive, authoritative brochure will go to key accounts as a part of a strong promotional program. The Institute has been fortunate in securing several thousand names of the leading lawn seed buyers for retail outlets in the areas in which we are interested.

(3) National Publications:

In case you need any additional copies of the article appearing in Horticulture, one of the most respected garden magazines, we are enclosing two copies for bulletin boards. Special write-ups appeared in the New York Times garden page, Flower and Garden, Household, Wall Street Journal and others. Special releases have also been prepared for the trade publications as a service to editors. Considerable spade work is being done at present

with national magazines in order to find a place on their early fall editorial schedules to tie in with our early fall program.

(4) Developments on the Highway Front:

Committee work with the American Road Builders Association roadside development committee has continued, including a presentation before the national convention in Chicago in January, preparation of resolutions referring to roadside seeding and its national implications, preparation and dissemination of a press release on the Chicago speech, an expanded article which will appear in the May issue of Parks & Recreation (official organ of institute of park executives), a much amplified article to appear through the ARBA Proceedings or publication committee (hence available to the more than 50,000 membership of the American Road Builders Association). A national press release has been made on the National Park & Recreations article for the wire services.

Incidentally, there is a good deal of interest in this at the moment, and we have had very successful meetings in Washington, D. C., and excellent pick up of the News Release referring to the Chicago speech. It is a good story for fine turfgrasses, including Kentucky Bluegrass, - the "pitch" being that with such tremendous expenditures we can't afford to neglect beauty on the roadside; beauty can come only from the use of fine turfgrasses, not haygrasses; that specifications should call for the proven, sod-forming, low-growing, rugged kinds of grasses that have proven themselves so adaptable for the best lawns of the regions.

(5) Ohio Demonstrations:

In working with the road building interests, we have been fortunate to be associated with Wilbur Garmhausen, and the Ohio State Highway Department. A series of test and demonstration plots has been arranged for north of Dayton, which will be a focal point for all highway landscape engineers who attend the nationally known short-course in Ohio in the autumn. Approximately 50 plots will be planted, with quality grasses based largely on Kentucky Bluegrass in contrast with other plots seeded with coarser haygrasses. Various fertilizations, mulching procedures, and so on are also included in the tests and demonstrations.

(6) Letter to Advisors:

Independent advisors received a summarization of research results undertaken at the Kimberdale Station, especially involving pre-soaking of Bluegrass seed to encourage germination, and treatment with gibberellic acid.

(7) Press Releases:

We were fortunate in having some of the press releases issued by the Kansas City office picked up nationally on several fronts. Especially encouraging was the summarization that appeared in Horticultural Newsletter, of January 14 and January 28. There were, respectively, as follows:

Volume IV - No 18 - January 14, 1957

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS, the nation's foremost lawn grass, GIVES THE BEST VALUE in the home lawn if it is GROWN FROM SEED ABOVE AVERAGE IN SIZE AND WEIGHT, according to Dr. Robert W. Schery, director of the Better Lawn and Turf Institute and Dale Kern, president of Seed Technology. Numerous samples of seeds were meticulously analyzed for weight, sprouting ability and vigor of seedlings. It was evident that the lighter weight seeds were usually less satisfactory for making a quick, vigorous start in the lawn. The heavier seeds sprout more quickly and grow more rapidly.

Volume IV - No 19 - January 28, 1957

IN THE SPRING A LAWN MAKER'S THOUGHTS TURN TO WEEDS, members of the American Society of Agronomy heard from Dr. R. W. Schery, director of the Better Lawn & Turf Institute. A study of lawn problems in 40,000 inquiries indicated that weeds and weeding occupy the top spot in the lawn maker's mind from April to August. Crabgrass is overwhelmingly the chief weed grass followed by quackgrass, nimblewill and Bermuda. Among the broadleaf weeds, chickweed was the subject of most inquiries with knotweed and clover not far behind. Familiar weeds like dandelion and plantain are seldom inquired about, probably because they are so well known.

These and similar press releases from Kansas City have been picked up by a number of national publications, including the Agronomy Society's "What's New in Crops and Soils".

(8) Editorial Influence:

It is difficult to assess just what influence luncheons and visits with various editors in the gardening world have. In meetings of the Horticultural Council, and visits to publication offices (such as Better Homes), we have done our best to get the quality turfgrass through Kentucky Bluegrass story across. Better Homes editorial attitude has been very friendly, and we have supplied a good deal of information, - although disappointed that so far not a great deal has appeared in print. On the other hand, in other popular gardening magazines, there have been staff-written pieces very sympathetic to our viewpoint, which in turn may have been influenced by conversations with the staff writers at the various horticultural meetings.

(9) Appearances and Visits:

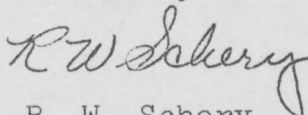
A good many talks and television appearances have been made. Particularly noteworthy were the appearances before the Community College group at Akron, Ohio, and the Indianapolis News Clinic. It has also been possible to visit Longwood Gardens, to encourage the Establishment of lawn demonstration plots there, and offer BLTI assistance in the preparation of a brochure for issuance at the Garden. Longwood Gardens is the du Pont sponsored attraction at Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, having as many as 15,000 visitors on a Sunday. It is one of the best endowed botanical gardens in the country, and very worthwhile to have association with.

We have also kept in touch with the Horticultural Council, several Experiment Stations (including visit to Beltsville, Maryland), and hope to pursue contacts at several of the horticultural, botanical, and agronomic meetings throughout the summer.

(10) Research:

Lacking manpower at the Kimberdale Station, no appreciable outdoor research has been possible as yet. We have, however, been in contact with Dr. Eliot Roberts, at Massachusetts University, who has submitted a plan for co-operative research to us. This research, already partly undertaken but needing added support, involves a basic study of why lawn grass (Bluegrass especially) behaves as it does under differing types of treatment. The study is a long term one, and intends to fathom as far as possible the reasons for Bluegrass behavior the same as the medical profession tries to understand the behavior of the human body in response to different environmental happenings. This would seem a worthy project to help sponsor if adequate funds become available.

Cordially



R. W. Schery
Director

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