

BETTER LAWN

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BETTER LAWN & TURF INSTITUTE—



Harvests

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Year End Issue - 1957

1957 was a good year for the Institute -- 1958 promises to be even better! During the past few months the membership has received reprints of articles and other announcements, so the summarizing issue of "Harvests" has been delayed until now.

Probably of first interest is the excellent response had through editors and magazines. Reprints of many articles were distributed to the members, indicating the good and broad coverage. Some of the titles published during late summer and autumn were:

- "Better Lawns are Autumn Sponsored" for Flower and Garden
- "Seeding America's New Front Yard" for the American Road Builder
- "What's Ahead for Better Lawns" and "Here's How to Build a New Lawn" for Horticulture
- "Save Your Lawn From Summer Slump" for Household
- "What Lawngrass to Choose" for New York Times, Sunday issue Aug. 25
- "Kentucky Bluegrass Adapts Itself Easily" for Crops and Soils
- "Establishing a High Plain Lawn" and "Lawn Weeding" for Green Thumb
- "Summertime Seeding" for Better Maintenance
- "100-Billion Dollar Front Yard for the Nation" for Parks and Recreation.

Trade Press Publicity

We have also enjoyed wonderful cooperation from the trade press. Most of you are subscribers to Seed World and Seed Trade News, and have noticed the publicity given the Institute, including in Seed Trade News a picture item on your officers, the year-end letter "We look back upon 1957 with satisfaction," the October 16 item "Dr. Schery warns against use of poor grass seed mixtures," and other mentions of the Institute. Seed World carried most of the speech to the Atlantic Seedsmen, "Old Favorites Need Never Die - in the Modern Lawn" and recently "Better Highway Seeding", useful as a piece for the American Road Builder, Neale committee mailing.

A number of our reprints have received favor, including the "100-Billion Dollar Front Yard" and the "Seeding America's New Front Yard", which were distributed for us by the A.R.B.A. A second printing of "Better Lawns are Autumn Sponsored" was included in the Flower and Garden Merchandiser, going to the trade in late August.

Representation at Many Meetings

Your Director has appeared at a number of congresses, meetings and conventions. A presentation before the Horticultural Council entitled "High Plains Lawning and Progress Parade" will appear in the proceedings of that congress. This warranted a widely placed press summary by the Kansas City office, and has achieved some publicity through the trade press.

Another effective meeting was the annual Turfgrass Conference at Fort Collins, Colorado. In the proceedings of this meeting we will have "Good Seed Battles for Better Turf" and this again was grist for the Kansas City press release mill. Two radio recordings concerning Kentucky bluegrass were distributed to all radio stations in the state of Colorado as a result of this conference. One was an approximately 15 minute playback, the other a shorter 8 minute fill-in, both through the State College at no cost to the Institute.

There were two important national meetings. The Botanical Society met with the American Institute for Biological Sciences at Stanford University. Our presentation related to the wide adaptability of Kentucky bluegrass. "Few plants have so much ability to adapt to differing climates and conditions as does Kentucky bluegrass", to quote from the abstract which the Kansas City office ably put into a press summarization for newspapers around the country.

The second national meeting was the Agronomy Society Golden Jubilee in Atlanta. Summarizations of the two papers before the Turfgrass Division have been sent the membership. One was "Regional Adaptation in Kentucky Bluegrass" and the other (co-authored with Dale Kern) "Pre-treatment of Lawngrass Seed." In various elaborations these have received a good deal of attention, including a write-up in Crops and Soils. A summarization was also mailed to all Institute advisors, and a press release on each was prepared by the Kansas City office.

Regional meetings included that of the Atlantic Seedsmen in New York ("Old Favorites Need Never Die--") subsequently summarized in Seed World. Miss Herbst has promised copies, which will be distributed to the membership if obtained.

The Weed Society meetings in Des Moines were attended, where it was possible to renew contacts with research and industry men interested in this phase of lawn care. The presentation before the Iowa Seedsmen on "Better Highway Seeding" has been dressed up for publication in Seed World.

The Western Seedsmen's Meeting permitted an executive committee session, and further elaboration of the A.S.T.A. Turfgrass Division. The Roadside Seeding Committee received a \$500 grant from the Farm Seed Division to "keep the ball rolling" until the Turfgrass Division finds a way to finance its own program.

Many Favorable Comments

Meetings and special visits to research centers have an intangible influence hard to evaluate. I believe we are making progress here, in that a formerly rabid advocate of Merion bluegrass now writes in the Blue Chip News - "Seedsmen are making blends of bluegrass seed using

delta, arboretum and seed from various sources. The blend gives a wider gene base and a broader range of adaptation. The injury from leafspot, occasionally serious in the spring, is reduced. This is a step forward with this standard basic turfgrass."

Dr. C. J. Willard, Professor of Agronomy at Ohio State University, writes after receiving our summer advisor mailing "Certainly there is nothing new in what I have put down in this questionnaire. It follows almost exactly the recommendations in the reprints you sent me, which I was very glad indeed to have. These, by the way, are among the most satisfactory articles on lawns that I have seen recently. I congratulate you heartily."

Mr. C. J. Neale, head of the Roadside Development Committee of the American Road Builders' Association, has referred to us in his letters to the committee. "Your attention is called to the article currently appearing in the Road Builders News on 'Seeding', by Dr. Schery."

Whenever possible visits are paid research centers. During the latter half of the year it has been possible to visit Michigan State, the University of Wisconsin, Rutgers University, V.P.I. (Blacksburg, Va.), Colorado State, Missouri, Indiana (Purdue), Kansas State, other locations in Kansas, Southern Colorado, Utah, the University of Nevada, University of Arizona, Stanford University, University of California, and several botanical gardens, parks, or other points of interest en route.

There is probably not a great deal more the Institute can do than already done in the "Soil Bank" program. Only a few states discriminate against bluegrass. That our efforts have helped can be attested by an August 29 letter from Mark P. Shuman of Pennsylvania. "Your letter of May 22, 1957 addressed to Arch V. Ritts, Chairman of the Pennsylvania ASC Committee, was not answered because a decision had not yet been reached on the practices to be included in the 1958 Agricultural Conservation Program for Pennsylvania. Recently the State Group approved the 1958 practices and have included Kentucky bluegrass in one of the seedings recommended under the Conservation Reserve Program."

Commercial Contacts

Contacts with commercial interests have been developed, in the hopes for an eventual broader base to the Institute (as approved at the November executive committee session). A conference is scheduled with International Minerals, in Chicago, during the A.S.T.A. Convention. Exchange of printed material has continued with American Chemical Paint, Dow, Du Pont, Toro and others. A conference was held in New York, through the good agency of R. Henry Morris, 3rd of Philadelphia, with Sterling Forest peat moss interests.

Within the seed industry our activities seem noticed and encouraged. A letter from W. H. Collins, of Henry Field's, says "Incidentally, your descriptions of lawn care as I have seen them quoted in various trade publications from time to time are as clearly and directly stated as any I have ever seen. Certainly, it is a pleasure to read such descriptions describing lawn care." Robert Appleman, president of Arkansas Valley Seeds, writes "Several weeks ago the writer received several reprints of articles which have appeared in various magazines and which were published through the Institute. I have not had opportunity until recently to read through them. They were both informative and interesting. We appreciate this gesture on your part."

Roadside Seeding Programs

We have cooperated with allied interests in the roadside seeding program. Demonstration plots were established north of Dayton with the Ohio Highway Department, a focal point on the Short Course tour which includes representatives from all over the country. Two papers have been prepared on these demonstrations, which will appear in the Short Course Proceedings.

Personal inspection was made with Dr. Blaser (Southern Seedsmen of the year) of the roadside research under way in Virginia. Cooperation with the Washington office of the American Road Builders' Association was also continued, in the name of the A.S.T.A. Our subcommittee has been active in helping organize a brochure on roadside seeding and fertilization.

In addition to the press releases already mentioned, the Kansas City office has continued to issue informational articles to gardening departments of various newspapers. Supplied McQueeney for autumn were "Seed the Lawn in Autumn", "Readying Soil for Lawn Seeding", "Seeding the Lawn", "Should the Lawn be Rolled", "Hurrying the New Lawn", and "Bolstering the Lawn in Autumn".

On one or two occasions there have been interviews with the press, especially a lengthy one with the Kansas City Star at the time of the Western Seedsmen's gathering in Kansas City.

A miscellaneous assortment of correspondence has continued, often as a result of contacts developed on speaking engagements. Generally leaders in a locality are involved, and merit technically studied answers. As we accumulate more and more reprints, covering most facets of lawn care, much of this routine inquiry can be handled by a covering letter with reprints attached. It may be that we will want to condense reprints into a small give-away or low-price booklet to handle inquiry?

Informational letters have continued to the Board of Advisors (key personnel in research institutions around the country) with gratifying results. The Institute supplies reprints and summarization of technical papers such as those given at the Agronomy Meetings.

Both advisors and Institute members received a summarization of the American Seed Trade Association Research and Development Committee questionnaire on seed sales. Here is an example of good working relationships with Mr. Heckendorn's office, from which good leads and helpful advice are often received.

President Gassner has made every effort possible to further the Institute program this year, being generous of his time for conferences, telephone and mail communication. His organization of committee sessions and private exchanges has greatly facilitated development. Mr. Gassner's 1958 plans augur for a successful year ahead.

We will continue hammering at bluegrass as the "hard core" of seed mixtures, stressing its virtues. Perhaps effort should be made to get away from the name "common" when referring to Kentucky bluegrass (as distinct from the varieties). If the trade could agree to make "common" Kentucky bluegrass "naturalized", "native", "blended", "primary", or "basic" instead, there would be less implication of inferiority. The campaign against cheap coarse grasses in mixtures should be unrelenting. Support from the scientific people is easily had. The Institute might seek support of

other quality grass interests against the common enemy, ryegrass. This is the big area in which to make gains. A campaign for increased attention to the seed package analysis might be a step in the right direction.

Prospects for 1958

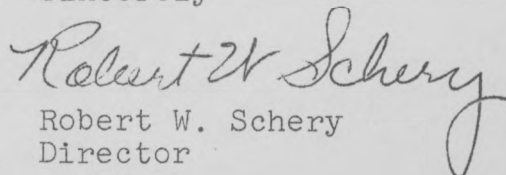
The spring 1958 season is shaping up excellently. Arrangements are completed for additional grass drawings from Mrs. Froeschner, which will be unusually effective in some national releases. Due to appear in Popular Gardening about April is a very helpful picture article of the "good grasses" contrasted to the "poor grasses". This will have only little text, just a short summary favoring a bluegrass mix instead of rye or Kentucky-31 fescue. Captions under the drawings will explain the individual grasses, Kentucky bluegrass featured.

A series of articles will appear in Flower Grower, probably in March, April and May. House and Garden has an item for use about April. Horticulture one for March. Better Building Maintenance has one on industrial grounds for the spring season. A McGraw-Hill gardening book, perhaps out in late 1958, carries our chapter on lawns. About April Scientific American will carry a lawnglass item, in which we have been able to include the bluegrass story. Economic Botany has asked for a resume of the industry and we have been approached on several less definite scores. This success would seem in part due to hired demonstration work last summer, enabling the Institute to speak from some experience. We hope that when finances permit, a full-time man can be secured for keeping bluegrass treatments going, to provide continuing information for talks and articles.

The research and demonstration programs sponsored through the Institute have made their first good strides this winter. A small grant has been placed with V.P.I. at Blacksburg, Virginia, supporting the roadside seeding research. Another is being placed with the University of Massachusetts, for a project this summer dealing with fertilization practices as they influence survival and dormancy of bluegrass. Several hundred pounds of seed have been procured for Ames, Iowa on seed packaging and storage. A letter of encouragement was sent Colorado A & M, implying support when needed for the fine program in that state. This interest in furthering scientific work should enhance Institute reputation.

Distribution of the bluegrass seed collected from different regional sources has paid off handsomely this year. It has been tested in many states, and been a "conversation piece" at several scientific gatherings. The effort shows rather conclusively that bluegrass harvested in almost any section of the country, is perfectly adaptable in other parts, and can be honestly marketed any place bluegrass grows.

Sincerely


Robert W. Schery
Director

RWS:H

Resume of speech - Colorado Turfgrass Conference
October 11, 1957 - Fort Collins, Colorado

GOOD SEED BATTLES FOR BETTER LAWNS

R. W. Schery

Simple scrutiny of the required listing on the seed box can assure lawn makers against improper quality, stressed Dr. Robert W. Schery, Director of the Better Lawn and Turf Institute in a presentation before the Colorado Turfgrass Conference. Kentucky bluegrass is the backbone for seed mixtures except in the deep South, said Dr. Schery, and can have as boon companions red fescues and certain bentgrasses.

Regulations, brand competition and trade ethics almost assure that seed in the package will grow. But there is no assurance that the right kind of grass has been chosen. Often mass distributors of lesser-known brands consider only price, including cheap, clumpy, coarse varieties better in the hayfield than the lawn.

Yet there could be no greater false economy than planting non-permanent species. Without the hard core of a bluegrass-based mixture, all the feeding, watering, weeding, pest control and mowing in the world can't make a good permanent lawn. These plus time spent are down the drain, unless satisfactory grass is chosen.

The conference theme was "Turf Enemies" and certainly cheap seed mixtures can be among the worst. The Better Lawn and Turf Institute, 2233 Grand Avenue, Kansas City, offers publications on quality seed and on lawn making.

Resume of speech - Iowa Seed Dealers' Association annual convention
October 25, 1957 - Des Moines, Iowa

BETTER HIGHWAY SEEDING

The new multi-billion 42,000 mile interstate highway system, soon to become America's most frequented "park", is worthy of the finest in landscaping as it is the best in engineering. For example, parkway dividers and landscaped berms merit bluegrass-quality turf, rather than the hay-grasses often used, stressed Dr. Robert W. Schery, Director of the Better Lawn and Turf Institute, in a presentation before the Iowa Seed Dealers' annual convention.

Newer highway concepts include built-in maintenance, i.e., proper planting in the first place to assure long-lasting low-maintenance growth. Also monotony-breaking use of natural vegetation and accent groups. Among safety features are plantings of perennially-green cover for fire resistance, and rhizomatous grasses producing tight sod for **firmness** in case of auto force-off.

Certain plants are capable of decelerating a car in case of accident, and are useful also against headlight glare, noise or dirt nuisance.

For the North we should see more use of Kentucky bluegrass and its stylish lawn companions, said Dr. Schery. These satisfy not only the esthetic needs, but are low-growing and attractive even in seed, perhaps with no mowing necessary until July. They are the world's best soil holders and sod-formers. Bluegrass makes one of the most durable sods for modern maintenance stressing chemical methods.

Even with high-speed limited-access highways, motoring shorn of beauty smacks of toil. We owe the public attractive as well as economy-designed highways, worthy of the tremendous public expenditure for new roads. Seedsmen, with a wealth of experience gained from lawnseed, can offer valuable counsel to the engineers, said Dr. Schery.