BETTER LAWN Harvests

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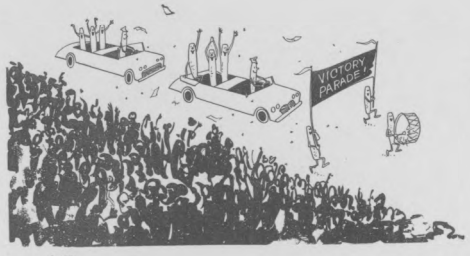
SELECTED SCENES AND SCRIPT EXCERPTS FROM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA - LAWN INSTITUTE TV FEATURETTE

No. 3

ANNOUNCER: "Ever wonder why grass seed is a mixture? If one type's superior, why mix it with others?"

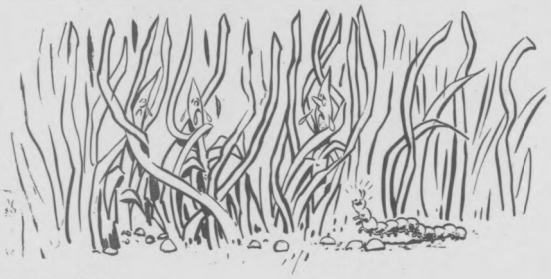
No. 10

ANNOUNCER: "The ingredients must by law be listed on the bag or box -- and the weed content, which in brand-name seed, of course, is almost nonexistent. In general, a seed mixture should contain at least 80% fine-textured, perennial grasses, such as the bluegrass and lawn fescues mentioned for northern regions."



No. 15

ANNOUNCER: "So as it turns out, the more expensive seed may be the better investment because it contains more of the grasses you want, and only the best seeds of these grasses."



No. 19

ANNOUNCER: "Weeds like crabgrass won't grow at all in the shade of your lawn grass, and other weed plants are quickly choked out by your husky, healthy lawn. Now here's a tip -- With bluegrass-fescue, the Lawn Institute suggests leaving the finely chopped clippings after mowing to recycle the nutrients --."

Space does not permit our showing illustrations for every slide with accompanying script for the TV announcer. However, the above abridged version does serve to provide a short summary of the presentation.

The whole sequence opens with the Lawn Institute logo, and concludes with both the Institute logo and the Encyclopedia Britannica logo, with the audio: "-- sent you by the Lawn Institute along with the folks who prepare these TV Featurettes at Encyclopedia Britannica."

GARRY MOORE APPRECIATES INSTITUTE'S AWARD OFFER BUT NETWORK PROHIBITS

Recently Bill Ward of McCullough's pointed out to Dr. Schery that the Garry Moore Show has very clever animated opening title sequence referring to the planting of grass seed, then the mowing after sprouting to make a "Garry Moore haircut".

Dr. Schery then wrote directly to Garry Moore pointing out that with 1961 being the International Seed Year, and with the Office of the Lawn Institute's Director having completed a couple of chapters for the U.S.D.A. 1961 Yearbook, some commemoration could be appropriate such as an award "complimenting him (Garry Moore) for sowing seed of good entertainment and happiness on the TV medium."

The letter concluded with Dr. Schery's asking if the Institute might develop something. Garry Moore's personal reply was as follows:

> "Many thanks for your letter and for the fine turfgrass seed! You were certainly thoughtful to send it, and I appreciate it very much.
>
> "I'm afraid that the rules of CBS Television prevent us from accepting an award or tribute such as you mentioned; however, I am very flattered and grateful to you for your interest.
>
> "I sincerely hope that our programs will continue to bring you pleasure in the future."

U.S.D.A. YEARBOOK ON SEEDS PROGRESSING

The editorial committee of the Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, has reviewed the two chapters upon which Dr. Schery has been active, due to appear in the 1961 Yearbook on Seeds. Martin Weiss, chairman, writes: "Your (Dr. Schery's) manuscript, Marketing Seeds of Lawn and Turfgrasses, has been reviewed by members of the Yearbook Committee. We feel you have done a highly creditable job in covering the subject matter assigned you." Martin goes on to discuss a few minor points, among which is the apparent aversion of U.S.D.A. scientists to accept the designation "natural Kentucky bluegrass" (they prefer "common" Kentucky bluegrass). Dr. Schery is still arguing the case for this more dignified designation of Kentucky bluegrass, but can't say what the outcome will be. The editorial board, in this instance, will have the power to overrule if they can't be convinced.

INSTITUTE AIDS PREPARATION OF OHIO AND MISSOURI LAWN BOOKLETS

A recent call from Dr. James Caldwell of Ohio State University revealed he is revising the lawn care leaflet for that state. He requested illustrations and was sent a battery of Institute photographs with captions.

Dr. Schery has completed the manuscript for the 24-page lawn handbook for the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis. Illustrations were sent along with some suggestions how this might be designed to make it rather widely salable through middle latitudes. Final editorial decisions have not been revealed but an entirely new manuscript was prepared (a revision and updating of an issue prepared previously for them by Dr. Schery in 1951).

INSTITUTE'S TEST PLOTS SHOW CONSIDERABLE ACTIVITY

The Institute received an additional test sample of bluegrass seed from Holland, to be called the variety name "Campus". It and other types have been planted in the Institute's test area. Fungicidal application has been made to some of the plot area testing comparative effectiveness in autumn and spring of Thiram, Captan and Kromad for leaf spot on bluegrass.

It was noticed that there is a higher incidence of a disease that blanches the bluegrass leaves, on our low-cut bluegrass that does not seem to be evident as green-up starts on the higher cut. If this holds true in the coming weeks, it will be another indication of the greater vigor higher cutting gives to bluegrass, since both high and low cut plots are otherwise treated identically.

GREEN THUMB CARRIES BLUEGRASS AND FESCUE ARTICLE

The March issue of "The Green Thumb" carried Dr. Schery's "Bluegrass (Poa pratensis) as a Lawn Grass". This is the English version of the same thing that is appearing in Eisele's issue of a lawn care bulletin in German (Darmstadt, Germany).

"Oregon lawn fescue" is pictured and there is reference to "Oregon red fescue varieties" in the text.

DR. SCHERY'S TALK INCLUDED IN HIGHWAY OFFICIALS' PROCEEDINGS

The recent publication of the Proceedings of the autumn convention of the American Association of State Highway Officials includes a complete reprinting of a paper which was given by Dr. Schery during that meeting. This publication is a permanent record for future reference -- and appearance in it assures that this influential group will be exposed to the Institute's thinking:

The following is an excerpt from this paper:

" . . . No matter the care taken with the seedbed, or to be lavished later, a seeded roadside can be no better than the kind of grass that is sown. Trial and error has proven which grasses survive; but ever more important in the changing pattern of highway seeding is whether the most attractive turf is used which still performs satisfactorily. Judgment of this is of course subjective, and there need not be universal agreement. But to my mind the coarse textured grasses are much over-used. Haygrasses such as tall fescue and brome would better be avoided wherever bluegrasses and fine fescues flourish. On some of those sunbaked cuts in middle latitudes there may be no substitute for tall fescue (Kentucky 31, Alta, Goars). There we are grateful for any cover, and the contrast with finer textured grasses is not apparent. But along northern roadsides where bluegrass colonizes so well, tall fescues seem insufficiently attractive (no matter their other virtues). Note the difference where tall fescue has been planted and where bluegrass has colonized some of the steeper cuts on the New York Thru-Way.

"If we must hand the laurels to the finer textured grasses for attractiveness, the decision is not quite so clear-cut on the score of endurance. For one thing differing slopes and soil, even within a few miles of each other, will have a marked effect. And then within the broad category of grass chosen, there are subtle subspecific variations that may determine local adaptation. Not all bluegrasses perform equally well, for example. The Merion variety is slow to sprout -- certainly a drawback for roadside planting. Merion also needs intensive care, seldom possible along a roadside.

"To an extent variety in the seed mixture is desirable. This provides some candidate grass for almost any roadside habitat. When the Kentucky bluegrasses and the Oregon red fescues are used as the hard core of a seed mixture, the bluegrasses afford a proven species for the better soils and the sunny locations. Yet the red fescues (Chewings, Illahee, Rainier, Creeping Red, Pennlawn) are an able second, ready to colonize the poorer soils, where drought and shade may prevail. These two grasses blend well together, are fine textured and thrive under similar maintenance. Since they are the chief ingredients of the finest lawn seed mixtures for the North, not only is their attractiveness attested to, but the know-how in their care has been thoroughly explored."

EXTENSIVE TESTS REVEAL NO STRAINS SUPERIOR TO NATURAL KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS

That following letter is from Dale Smith, Chairman of the Agronomy Department, University of Wisconsin. It was written to Bill Teweles, and relates to a ten-year period of tests and screening with the hope of finding a superior type of bluegrass. You will want to note the last paragraph of the letter.

". . . Several years ago we were growing many bluegrasses with the expectation that one or more of them might prove to be much better generally than common Kentucky bluegrass in lawn turf. Eventually we reduced this number to about five and three years ago we found that these five which we had previously thought were quite resistant to forage diseases were surprisingly susceptible to rust

infection in the fall of the year. We do not know just what rust may have come in at the time, but presume it was not generally prevalent earlier. Because of this experience we decided that the five strains were not particularly superior and have actually not tried to retain them. We have been growing some of the foreign plant introductions in small spaced plant progenies to try to determine whether they may or may not be superior to common Kentucky bluegrass. However we have not found that any of this type of material is particularly helpful and feel now if one were going to develop a Kentucky bluegrass which was more or less "fool-proof", especially from the disease standpoint, that extensive testing would be needed.

" . . . I do not believe that any of the stations have anything which is going to be generally much superior to common bluegrass and in most respects may not be equal to Merion which, except for a few weaknesses, seems to be rather well adapted in the northcentral states."

OHIO PARKS ASSOCIATION HEARS DR. SCHERY

"The Grass in Your Life" was the subject of Dr. Schery's talk before the Ohio Parks Association at Lake Hope State Park, May 9. Dr. Schery emphasized the need for understanding the habits of the grasses that best fit a particular need.

Citing an example of a man who for eight years had tried to develop a presentable lawn -- but seemed to be doing just what he shouldn't -- and not doing what he should -- Dr. Schery suggested that, "With but a fraction of the expense and effort, a light seeding of bluegrass-red fescue could have been made, which would have lodged in the soil that the winter has loosened, or which could have been scratched into the friable bare spots for even surer lodging.

" . . . The two quality grasses most appropriate for general turf usage in the Ohio climate are Kentucky bluegrass and red fescue varieties such as come from Oregon. Seedsmen have long blended varieties of species, to broaden a seed mixture's adaptation. Natural Kentucky bluegrass is itself a mixture of many wild types. Red fescue varieties added to Kentucky bluegrass provide a quick sprouting component, and one adapted to shade and poor soil as well as open areas."

DR. SCHERY DISCUSSES CLIMAX TESTING AT CORNELL

During his April visit at Cornell University, Dr. Schery had the opportunity to discuss the Lawn Institute's views on climax testing of bluegrass with some of the more prominent men in New York agriculture. Among those with whom Dr. Schery talked in this state, which has been one of the most vehement in "defense of the consumer" and regulation tendencies, were representatives of Cornell University, the New York Experiment Station, the Geneva Experiment Station and of several research departments of the Agricultural college.

"GIFTED STUDENTS" CONDITIONED TO QUALITY GRASSES

The American Institute of Biological Sciences recently asked Dr. Schery to develop an educational "research project" for their "Gifted Student Project." The idea behind these projects is to give the gifted student a taste of independent work rather than the purely theoretical work. These students are an extremely worthwhile audience, because whether or not they go on to become a professional biologists, they almost certainly will become home owners (and lawn keepers).

Dr. Schery's article presented to the A.I.B.S. is entitled, "Lawn Grass Basics".

This emphasizes that there is an outdoor laboratory at everyone's door, where by learning the characteristics and behavior of the quality turfgrasses (bluegrass and fescue) one can intelligently relate mowing, fertilizing and other management practices.

The project is chiefly one in experiencing experimental techniques, with bluegrass and red fescue as the "guinea pigs". From our member's viewpoint it could prove useful in calling attention of an audience in formative years to these quality grasses, their response and seasonal pattern of growth.

In any event if the bibliography accompanying the project is perused, a student should become acquainted with these grasses and educated on how to use them.

ANOTHER TESTING METHOD REARS ITS HEAD!

Your attention is called to an article appearing in the April, 1960 (Volume 52, Number 4) Agronomy Journal. This is "A Suggested Method for Determining Purity of Certain Chaffy Seeded Grasses", by Jack R. Harland and Robert M. Ahring. There is a pertinency, in that here is a proposal paralleling the climax method of testing bluegrass, which the Institute is currently opposed to until further research has been accomplished. While bluegrass is not considered one of the "chaffy seeded grasses" in this study, I think we could reasonably ask the scientists why not this method instead of climax? It may very well be that this would not be an improvement either, but it would serve to emphasize that there are options other than climax which have scarcely been considered and have not entered into the research program leading to A.O.S.A. action adopting climax.

In the Harland and Ahring method a sample of seed would be stripped of all chaff and hulls, by mechanical milling in a modified Waring blendor. The true seeds resulting would be weighed, and a conversion factor worked out for the seed (on the strength of extensive research) would be applied. In other words the weight of this seed would simply be multiplied by the conversion factor. Apparently on the seeds tested, this has proven very accurate and reliable as to repeatability.

It may not be fitted at all to bluegrass, but as mentioned above this sort of study should certainly be taken into consideration before climax is insisted upon by the seed testing officials. In other words this gives us another point to question, and it should be remembered in questioning whether climax has been sufficiently researched.

REPORT ON OHIO EXPERIMENT STATION TESTS

The following is a summary of observations made by Dr. Schery during his visit at the Ohio Experiment Station, Wooster, Ohio, April 29, with Dr. R. R. Davis, Professor in Charge.

"Davis currently recommends for Ohio a bluegrass-red fescue combination. For the southern part of the state and areas receiving less fertilization, he suggests natural Kentucky bluegrass. For those willing to manage a little more intensively, he would suggest Merion as the bluegrass component. At the time of visit the Merion was very attractive, and did seem to have some advantages over natural Kentucky bluegrass in thickness and general appearance including freedom from weeds. Later in the season, of course, Merion would be afflicted with rust. At that time it would need unusually heavy fertilization if it were to appear attractive.

"Many weeds were in evidence at the time of visit. For those marketing pre-emergence crabgrass products, it might be of interest that the first crabgrass was noted about April 25 this year. Home owners using pre-emergence crabgrass killers during the month of May might have disappointing results.

"The plots seeded the autumn of 1958 have gone about long enough to indicate which species are tending to dominate. At a 2 pounds per 1000 sq. ft. seeding rate, ryegrass sets back but does not completely keep out the bluegrasses. Davis would certainly not recommend ryegrass, but if a light seeding rate is used he feels that most of the ryegrass will kill out through winter, and the bluegrass will come in the following spring. However, if both redtop and ryegrass are present, the plots seem to indicate that the ryegrass holds back the bluegrass enough so that the redtop gains the upper hand. Davis feels that redtop has considerable potentiality for hanging on, and would be less desirable as a nursegrass in a seeding mixture than would ryegrass.

"In the comparison of bluegrass varieties, including regional sources of seed furnished by the Institute, there is still no difference between the sources. All of the natural bluegrasses look about the same, at both cutting heights. Newport was just newly planted this year, and so far seems to be little different than the other plots of the natural group.

"Davis has been disappointed that seed received from the Pacific Northwest seems to carry enough seed of Poa trivialis, Poa annua, and occasionally velvetgrass, that these get a start in the plot. Davis considers Poa triv and bentgrass as worse weeds than what are conventionally termed noxious weeds in seed control listings. The fescue seeds are the ones that seem to contain velvetgrass, bluegrass seeds the Poa triv and off-type bluegrasses.

"A rating was made of the bentgrass plantings, which will be available to anyone who may be interested. The fertilizer treatments still show no appreciable difference with the type of fertilizer used, just so that the total quantity of nitrogen is received. In general, plots receiving autumn and winter fertilization with a light spring fertilization seem superior to those receiving spring and summer feeding.

"Where bluegrass seeding mixtures were tried, Merion-natural Kentucky bluegrass combinations with up to 50% or more of natural Kentucky bluegrass could not be distinguished from straight Merion seedings. Bluegrass in lawn fescue plantings improved the texture of the fescue (less swirls), and the fescue for its part proved an excellent nursegrass for the bluegrass. The Kentucky 31 fescue looked very poorly, but the lawn fescues were in good shape. Those receiving less than 3 pounds of nitrogen per year were superior to those receiving heavier rates of fertility."

REPORT VERIFIES INSTITUTE WRITINGS

Here are a few thoughts by Dr. Victor B. Youngner, as presented to the National Golf Course Superintendents' annual convention. Youngner is an Assistant Professor of Horticulture at the University of California.

Basically, Youngner was reviewing the interaction of light, temperature, fertility and so on, in producing the obvious turf responses that we have long known and talked about. Institute writings have always suggested taking it easy with fertilization in hot weather, watering little or not at all, mowing high. Now, here in print is outside, professional backing for such conclusions.

Youngner (a Lawn Institute Advisor) states: "Research work of recent years indicates that with many of our cool season grasses root and top growth are opposing growth phases. That is, conditions which promote top growth are not the same as those that promote maximum root development.

" . . . temperature points -- for root growth are several degrees lower than for top growth for many cool season grasses.

"Food reserves, carbohydrates stored in roots and other plant parts, increase during the period when top growth is very slow. As temperatures increase above a certain optimum, the rate of food storage decreases until eventually there is a utilization of previously stored food materials.

"High nitrogen feeding which stimulates top growth, when coupled with clipping has a further restrictive effect on root development.

"On the surface, it would appear that we are fighting a battle against ourselves when we feed and mow. This indeed may be true if good judgment is not used. We see that as warm summer temperatures arrive, natural root development slows and top growth increases. However, we continue to fertilize and mow further retarding root growth and perhaps actually damaging the root system.

"While all this is occurring, disease organisms in the soil and organic mat are multiplying as the soil becomes warmer. The result is familiar to nearly everyone with turfgrasses. The time comes when the turf has a shallow weak root system, a soft succulent top and little food reserve. Then, if weather conditions are favorable for disease infection, practically nothing can stop it."

HORTICULTURE MAGAZINE CARRIES SCHERY STORY

The May issue of Horticulture Magazine -- a publication reaching nearly 80,000 readers -- features "Don't Let Crabgrass Spoil Your Lawn," by Dr. Robert Schery. In addition to giving worthwhile counsel on crabgrass control, Dr. Schery incorporates such information as ". . . Kentucky bluegrass and the red fescue varieties grow so well in the North that a permanent lawn can gain the upper hand (over crabgrass). Thus a good hex for crabgrass is to treat bluegrass and the lawn fescues with respect in summer."

" . . . Bluegrass and lawn fescues fill tightly in autumn, pick up again in early spring long before temperatures are warm enough for crabgrass to sprout. Crabgrass is an annual so must reinfest each year from seed. If the bluegrass-red fescue sod is thick, little or no crabgrass shows up."

BLUEGRASS-FESCUES FEATURED IN BUILDING BOOK

"Build Your Lawn" is the title of the two and one-half page story appearing in the May, 1960 issue of Better Building Maintenance Magazine. Prepared by Dr. Schery, who along with the Lawn Institute is given authorship credit in the publication, this story will be seen by over 51,000 persons concerned with building maintenance. Commercial, office, government, industrial, institutional and warehousing installations are represented in the circulation of this publication.

"I believe we can take natural Kentucky bluegrass, mix in some of the Oregon red fescue varieties, plant intelligently, mow and fertilize with consideration, and end up with a lawn excitingly attractive -- reliable and economical to maintain as well," Dr. Schery begins.

Similar mention and description of the advantages of Kentucky bluegrass and Oregon red fescues appear throughout the story -- which will be read by this influential audience.

AGRICULTURAL METEOROLOGY CONFERENCE HEARS SCHERY

Just prior to the Annual Meeting, Dr. Schery addressed the Agricultural Meteorology Conference, meeting in Kansas City on May 18. His subject was, "Bluegrass and the Weather," in which he discussed the relationship of a year's rainfall data to the size and quality of the following year's June bluegrass crop. Kodachrome slides were used to illustrate that dry summers with wet autumns are usually conducive to a good crop. Wet summers lessen the effectiveness of ample autumn moisture, and poor autumn moisture reduces the crop the next year. Of course any severe extreme in spring can counteract the

"potentiality" from the year before. This potentiality is set by weather (hence growth) the year preceding harvest, Dr. Schery told the group.

SUNSET MAGAZINE CREDITS THE INSTITUTE

The recently released Sunset Magazine Lawn and Ground Cover Book shows this acknowledgement: Robert W. Schery, Director, The Lawn Institute, Marysville, Ohio.

REPORT FROM MILORGANITE OVERSEEDING TRIALS

A letter from Charles Wilson of the Milorganite Company to Dr. Schery reports the following:

"This is in reply to your letter of May 2 concerning our overseeding trials at East Lake and Sea Island, Georgia. Next week I will visit both places to get the final series of pictures on the results. This will be presented at the Agronomy meetings in Chicago this fall.

"We feel the final answer will be the use of a grass seed mixture. Those who have tried straight bentgrass find it performs well during the latter part of the winter season, but is sometimes poor until February. Ryegrass, on the other hand, comes in strong early in the season but goes out with a bang with the first hot weather in the spring.

"Interestingly, among the individual grasses tried last fall, Pennlawn fescue and Poa trivialis were outstanding. Pennlawn has remained the best plot all season at East Lake. It was good at first at Sea Island, but deteriorated badly there after February. Poa trivialis has been good in both locations.

Kentucky bluegrass by itself has been disappointing. However, it may have a place in a mixture. The University of Tennessee likes it for overseeding common Bermuda lawns. Our tests were run on putting greens. We experienced no difficulty in getting any of the grasses established in tight fine leaf Bermuda. Of course, the greens were spiked, Verti-cut, and top-dressed at the time of seeding.

"We think now that one reason ryegrass has been favored in the past is that it masks the presence of Poa annua. Poa trivialis serves the same function. When poa invades the other winter grasses it is quite noticeable."

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING . . . ABOUT THE LAWN INSTITUTE AND FINE GRASSES . . .

"I sincerely appreciate receiving (the requested reprints) and I too will look forward to any opportunity you may have next winter that may bring you to Chicago."

John A. Lundgren, Supervisor
In-Service Training
Chicago Park District

"Thank you for enclosing the various publications on good lawn management. In the spring we get many questions on all aspects of lawn fertilization and other lawn problems, and we certainly appreciate your keeping us supplied with various stories on this subject.

"Thank you again, and we would appreciate being continued on your mailing list for any other publications that you may have in the future."

Curtis Overdahl
Extension Specialist in Soils
University of Minnesota

"If you have grass growing adjacent to your roses upgrade the lawn -- giving pre-emergence treatment for crabgrass, feeding, seeding or whatever is needed. This reporter had occasion to see two gardens a short distance apart, both were charming with exceptionally nice roses. The slides show the emerald green setting of one and a very spotted brown and green lawn centering the other garden. Unless a comparison is made you cannot realize what a lawn does to enhance the beauty of rose plantings."

Mrs. Albert E. Joliffe
Illinois-Indiana District Chairman
American Rose Society

"The Better Lawn and Turf Institute brochure was received the other day and as usual contains many interesting facts --. The word is finally getting around that a good lawn enhances roses --."

Margaret E. Coon
Managing Editor
American Rose Magazine
Columbus, Ohio

"Buy only the best mixture of permanent grass seed for your area."

from - Get Started Right Now for Your
Best Lawn Ever"
Better Homes & Gardens
April, 1960

"Hope your recent visit to the University of Massachusetts was pleasant, your lecture for the Turfgrass Conference was excellent. I was one of the unfortunates to be sitting in the middle and never did get any of those leaflets you handed out. I would like to obtain them and any other that were distributed during the past year. Professor Hal Mosher, State Horticulturist, told me you distribute much new and helpful literature."

Hal Standring
Senior in Horticulture and Turf
University of Massachusetts

"Incidentally, the feature on 'Autumn and Your Lawn' was used by our agricultural extension people. Your treatment of the commercial product in this feature was fine."

Peter Lyman
WBOY-TV
Clarksburg, W. Va.

"Thank you for your generous response to my request for grass information. -- Thanks also for your kind offer to work up a story on the trends and hopes in lawns. I'm going to take you up on that for certain. I hope your new book is a tremendous success."

Earl Aronson, State Editor
Associated Press
Albany, New York