

**BETTER  
LAWN**



---

PUBLISHED PERIODICALLY BY THE BETTER LAWN AND TURF INSTITUTE  
P O Box 108 Pleasant Hill TN 38578-0108 Phone: 615/277-3722

---

Eliot C Roberts, Editor

Beverly C Roberts, Asst Editor

---

Volume 29 Number 3

October 1982

CONTENTS

General Topics Section

Page

I	- The Harvest Mix	2
II	- Director's Dialogue	4
III	- Lawn Institute Pitch	10
IV	- Association and Society Reports	19
V	- P.O.Box 108	26
VI	- Readers Forum	26
VII	- Quarterly Program Report	26
VIII	- Itinerary	27
IX	- Looking Ahead	27

Technical Topics Section

X	- Threshing the Journals	28
XI	- Score Card	29
XII	- Research Synthesis	29

## I. THE HARVESTS MIX

(An introduction to this issue of Harvests)

For the first time Better Lawn - Harvests is being released from The Lawn Institute's new office in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee. The past twenty eight and one half volumes have served the needs of the membership well. The new editorial staff dedicate this issue to a second quarter century of communication concerning lawn seed and the fine turf industry.

### A - New Format For Harvests

This issue is presented in a somewhat different format. Two sections are identified as in the past: General Topics and Technical Topics. However, within each section feature material will be organized under one of twelve headings. These headings will appear in the same order in each issue of Harvests to provide an easy identity for subject matter contained. The following headings have been selected for an initial trial run:

- The Harvests Mix - An introduction to each issue of the newsletter.
- Director's Dialogue - An editorial on The Lawn Institute and related topics.
- Lawn Institute Pitch (LIP) - Current outreach by word of the written and spoken word.
- Reports from Professional Associations and Societies - Feature presentations based on key note addresses.
- P.O.Box 108 - Commentary from the mail, worth repeating.
- Readers Forum - News and views from the membership.
- Quarterly Program Report - Institute progress and achievement.
- Itinerary - Travel, meetings attended and contacts made.
- Looking Ahead - Plans for the future.
- Threshing the Journals - Review of current turfgrass research literature.

- Score Card - Presentation of research data and conclusions from turfgrass fielddays and conferences.
- Research Synthesis - Analysis of research reports and interpretation of results.

This outline is designed to cover the topics usually presented in Harvests in such a way that they are easy to find with quick access to useful and important ideas and information. Your evaluation of this new format will be helpful during the months ahead.

#### B. New Headpiece for Harvests

This issue of Harvests features a new headpiece designed to relate better lawns to the harvesting of quality seed. Seed is basic to the establishment and maintenance of lawns and all fine turf. The right seed followed by use of modern equipment, advanced formulations of fertilizer and special lawn and turf pesticides, yields satisfaction and enjoyment for all who culture plants and have respect for the landscape. This is the theme. It's worth promoting.

#### C. Volume 29, Number 3

This issue of Harvests has been prepared as a follow-up to Volume 29, Number 2 which featured "The Institute's First Quarter Century: An Historical Perspective" by Dr. Schery and "The New Boy on the Block Looks to the Second Quarter Century," and "Better Lawns and Turf-1984 and Beyond" by Dr Roberts.

An outline on The Lawn Institute -Who We Are and What We Do will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and considered for publication with appropriate graphics as a public relations leaflet.

"The Politics of Conservation" was the theme of the thirty seventh annual meeting of the Soil Conservation Society of America August 8-11. There is a critically important message here for the entire Landscape Industry. Share your thoughts on this topic by sending us material to include in the next issue of Harvests - Readers Forum. Note: The Politics of Landscape Horticulture is our business.

Because of the need to place organizational emphasis on getting the office moved and functioning during the past three months, the three Technical Topics: "Threshing the Journals", "Score Card" and "Research Synthesis" are not adequately presented in this issue. Volume 29, Number 4 will bring us up-to-date in these important areas.

## II DIRECTOR'S DIALOGUE

(Editorial on Lawn Institute and related topics)

### WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

All organizations find it important to have an appreciation of who they are and what they do. This is of special value in maintaining membership, in attracting new members and in development of ways and means for promoting and financing high priority programs and projects.

The Lawn Institute has some twenty five years of educational and research experience and service. Its programs have helped in the creation of lawns for a more beautiful America. Thus, this is an appropriate time to evaluate what has been accomplished and then plan for future needs of an increasingly important landscape industry and consumer public. By accurately answering the questions asked of us, who are you? what do you do?, we will be ready to be of continued service to both industry and consumer.

The following material has been prepared to answer these questions. We hope that it will prove useful in reminding current members of many of the important objectives and goals they have been so instrumental in developing. Also, we look forward to use of this information in making new friends for The Lawn Institute.

# THE LAWN INSTITUTE

## Its Organization and Services

### History

In 1955 The Better Lawn and Turf Institute was formed as a nonprofit corporation to assist in and encourage, through research and public education, the improvement of lawns, turf and grasslands. This has been accomplished by providing information on: the best grasses, the best chemical products, the best equipment and the best techniques for planting and maintaining lawns and turf. Such information has been specially prepared for garden writers, broadcasters, consultants, classroom instructors, Cooperative Extension specialists and agents and the general public through individual or group contact. Whatever the requirements of the client, or the conditions imposed by soil and climate, there are improved turfgrass cultivars to provide the best in ground cover and the most effective control of soil erosion.

### Membership in the Institute

Three types of membership are offered by The Lawn Institute. These include: Proprietary Membership (sponsor of a variety approved by the Variety Review Board); Sponsoring Membership ( Any member who is concerned with and desires to promote the development and use of improved turfgrass varieties and products for improving turfgrass performance); Supporting Membership ( Seed firms, growers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, brokers and all other parties associated with the lawn and turf industry). These three types of membership provide an opportunity for individuals and industry representatives to support the educational and research goals of the Institute.

### Meetings of the Institute

The annual meeting of The Lawn Institute is held in conjunction with the summer convention of The American Seed Trade Association. The annual meeting is open to all members. A meeting of the Board of Directors follows the general meeting.

## Officers and Directors

A President, Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer are elected at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors. Not less than thirteen, nor more than twenty five Directors serve on the Board. The Board sets policies, conducts affairs and guides the officers and staff. An executive committee consisting of the officers and other directors appointed by the Board conduct Institute business between meetings of the Board.

## Staff and Office Facilities

The Lawn Institute staff consists of a director and an office manager/graphic artist. The headquarters office is located on County Line Road (P.O.Box 108) in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee (38578-0108). Phone: 615/277-3722.

## Income and Accountability

Lawn Institute income is from member contributions. Amounts are determined by type of membership. The Institute utilizes accepted accounting and auditing practices and except for a modest reserve, expends all funds in services to a lawn and turfgrass clientele.

## Importance of The Lawn Institute Services

As people throughout well developed countries have moved from place to place, many have lost touch with family traditions of gardening and lawn care. Different plants in different climates require different cultural practices. Where does one obtain guidance in the establishment and maintenance of lawngresses ?

Within the garden industry, only the seed trade has had the foresight to fund a continuing national, non commercial program to help provide answers to lawn care questions. The Lawn Institute provides home gardeners regular reminders of the ease, economy and satisfaction of lawn tending. We believe this effort has contributed significantly to a new realization of the importance of plants that enhance our environment.

### Services to Garden Communicators

The Lawn Institute helps to meet the needs of garden writers and technical advisors for up-to-date information. This is accomplished by release of Press Kits twice a year to newspaper editors, garden writers and other communicators in the Cooperative Extension Service and in radio and television. Separate coverage is given to northern and southern regions of the country. Credit lines are not required for use of this material.

As many as three dozen Institute titles have appeared in a single newspaper's garden section. Total column inches of copy could cost as much as a million dollars annually were it paid-for advertising. Institute releases are better than advertising because they are viewed with authority, having editorial commendation of publication or garden editor.

### Contributions to "Lawns, Garden and Pools"

Besides regular spring and fall Press Kit mailings, the Institute collaborates in a joint effort to provide smaller publications and house organs with the Lawns Garden and Pools "supplement" in newspaper format.

### Publication of Lawn Articles

Some three hundred articles have been published in 50 key landscape magazines and journals by the Institute Director over the past 25 years. Reprints of these have been of value in responding to lawn questions by mail and as handouts at lectures and workshops.

### Special Topic Writing

Special booklets are prepared from time to time to meet needs of specific audiences. In addition, national magazines and newspapers call upon the Institute for up-to-date information of importance to their readers. The Director is available for the development of special feature articles on request.

### Educational Programs- Slide Sets and Movies

The Lawn Institute produced a 16 mm color film entitled Bluegrass Beauty that has received extensive showing across the country. The slide sets are popular and from the Institute collection of color slides, several illustrated lectures are available for presentation by the Director. These may be scheduled for conferences and workshops of local or regional nature at modest cost.

### Maintenance of Photographic Library

A photographic library of considerable dimension is maintained to supply photocopy for use in articles, press mailings and for appropriate loan. Travel throughout varying climatic regions provides the Director with a valuable opportunity to record on film those lawn and turf responses that may help most to explain how turf-grasses grow.

### Graphic Arts Expertise

Graphic arts rendition of landscape features including lawns helps the gardener visualize "how to do it" procedures. Learning of the complexities of plant growth through simplified illustrations makes gardening fun and thus the Institute places emphasis on graphic presentations.

### Contributions to Research and Education Centers

The Institute cooperates with leading research and education centers throughout the United States and Canada and within those countries represented in the International Turfgrass Society. In addition to research and publication sponsorship, this involves monitoring research results on a continuing basis through attendance at field days and conferences and review of reports and publications. Special mailings are made to Cooperative Extension Services and a regular flow of inquiry and correspondence is serviced.

A limited supply of seed of approved cultivars is kept on hand at the headquarters office for distribution to research centers when samples are requested. In this way, demonstration plots may be placed with the probability of Institute follow-up and evaluation.



### Evaluation of Grasses and Lawn Maintenance Products

The Institute contributes to the maintenance of lawn demonstration areas for new cultivars, so that the Director can better observe performance characteristics of the approved varieties. A Variety Review Board oversees proprietary grass cultivars included in the Institute program. A "Seal of Approval" is available for these proprietaries. Lawn maintenance products may also be granted a "Seal of Approval" upon compliance with Institute standards and procedures.

### Contributions to State, Regional, National and International Conferences

Presentations of technical information are made at state, regional, national and international conferences. These are based on the synthesis of new concepts and theory from existing research reports from around the world. This type of original research, utilizing existing knowledge, contributes to the practical understanding of landscape ecology.

### Better Lawn Harvests - Newsletter

Journals and magazines are reviewed, and pertinent research results reported quarterly in the newsletter, Better Lawn Harvests. This release is mimeographed at the headquarters office and contains about one hundred pages annually. Harvests keeps seed growers informed of ongoing turfgrass research in such areas as herbicide, insecticide and fungicide use. Quarterly mailings help members to keep up to date on Institute activities and on practical application of technical information from publications and reprints.

### Literary and Editorial Contributions

The Institute Director, for many years, has been respected as author of several teaching texts as well as books on lawns. Dr. Robert W. Schery has been a contributor to prestigious encyclopedias such as Hortus III, Wyman's and Readers Digest. Dr. Eliot C. Roberts has edited the Proceedings of the Second International Turfgrass Research Conference published by the American Society of Agronomy. A close association exists between the Institute and the American Seed Trade Association and other professional societies such as the American Society of Agronomy,

the American Society for Horticultural Science and  
the Soil Conservation Society of America.

---

For more information on The Lawn Institute, on  
membership and how we may be of service to you,  
write to:

Eliot C Roberts, Ph.D, Director  
The Lawn Institute  
County Line Road  
P.O.Box 108  
Pleasant Hill, TN 38578-0108  
Phone: 615/277-3722

### III LAWN INSTITUTE PITCH (LIP)

(Current outreach by way of the written and  
spoken word)

#### The Five Point Platform

The past three months have provided an opportunity for  
the Director to meet and visit with many individuals and  
several groups to talk about The Lawn Institute. The  
pitch (LIP) has focused on a five point platform. These  
five points were presented at the Annual Meeting in Dallas  
and introduced in Research Volume 29, Number 2. They are:

- A - Seed is Basic
- B - Professionalism in Lawn Care
- C - Lawn Institute Research
- D - Learning of Lawns
- E - Public Relations

This platform has been well received and the following  
elaboration will update points discussed earlier.

#### A. Seed Is Basic

All lawn and turf management practices are prescribed on  
the basis of meeting cultivar requirements. Thus, it all

starts with the seed. Now, how do we get this concept so that it is clearly understood and functional with our varying clientele. The following points are being discussed and will be helpful in formulating educational programs:

### 1- Proprietaries

Are the proprietary grasses recognized by The Lawn Institute representative of the best cultivars on the market? This is certainly the objective of the Variety Review Board. Their task is a difficult one because of the wide selection of material to evaluate. An excellent list is in use at the present time with future prospects looking good for new entries.

These issues are of continuing importance to us:

- Which Proprietaries should be recognized?
- How many Proprietaries should be listed at any given time?
- How can the Proprietary name be used to increasing advantage in the description of desirable cultural characteristics? (Note: some names are better suited than others; we should make best use of all background information related to the Proprietary name.)

### 2- Non-proprietary Grasses

As important as Proprietary grasses are for lawn and turfgrass clientele, they are part of the total seed inventory which also includes Non-proprietary grasses. With respect to research and education, The Lawn Institute maintains a posture representing all lawn and turfgrasses.

Cultural practices favorable for bluegrasses, fine fescues, perennial ryegrasses, turf type tall fescues, bentgrasses, bermudagrasses, centepedegrass, bahia, zoysia and others are fundamental to consumer satisfaction. These practices not only vary between grass types, but also are different for different cultivars. Thus, we attempt to walk (with sound information on grasses in general) before we run (with specifics on the new improved Proprietaries).

There is an important place for both Proprietaries and Non-proprieties and The Lawn Institute is dedicated to the appropriate use of both types. Merion bluegrass was one of the early "stars" as was Highland bentgrass. These grasses along with many of the fine fescues will be important to us for years to come.

### 3- Seed Mixtures

Consumers most often purchase seed mixtures. These usually have advantages over pure seedings in the established lawn. Many of the most popular mixtures are identified by name rather than by ingredients. At the present time The Lawn Institute has minimal influence on consumer education related to mixtures.

This is a complex topic because of regional and even local variations in growing conditions that influence seed recommendations. It is proposed that prospects for cooperative work with Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Services be explored. This would have the objective of utilizing the Seal of Approval for mixtures that meet standards set by both public and private researchers.

### 4- The Sunbelt Market

The Lawn Institute has not placed real emphasis on the potential Sunbelt market. It has influenced practices throughout the Transition Zone that borders cool season and warm season. Many of the new Proprietary bluegrasses, fine fescues, perennial ryegrasses and turf type tall fescues are well suited for this zone.

It appears that cool season markets are stronger than Transition Zone and warm season markets and that seed is staying green. This situation requires further evaluation and educational effort during the months immediately ahead.

In addition, bermudagrass, centpede, bahia and zoysia seed usage will continue to be significant throughout southern states. The Lawn Institute must become more active in research and education with these and other warm season grasses. The seed industry concerned with these grasses will be contacted so that we may become much better acquainted.

### 5- Seed Laws and Laboratories

The issue of quality seed involves not only germplasm characteristics but also those properties checked by public and private seed laboratories.

The matter of weed seeds is of continuing concern. Whether the nomenclature is "noxious" or "undesirable crop", the primary concern should relate to ease of

public understanding. Confusion that results from complicated labels and regulations is often more detrimental than realizing that conservation is needed and this should be provided without discouraging use of seed at a reasonable price.

#### 6- Specialty Seed Items and Mixtures

The Lawn Institute is primarily concerned with grasses for lawns and turf. That is, types regularly clipped and maintained. In addition, there is a place for some naturalistic ground covers that feature an attractive mix of grasses and wild flowers and that protect the soil from erosion. Soil conservation is everybody's business and it is the position of The Lawn Institute that the residential landscape, in addition to community parks, playgrounds and golf courses; and grounds maintained by schools, universities, and public and private business concerns; and local, state and nationally maintained roadsides represent the most effective grassland agriculture in the country with respect to conservation of soil and water resources.

As a part of this important effort, we should take pride in the results obtained and continue to promote all aspects of soil conservation. The availability of seed mixtures for naturalistic areas will help promote this concept.

We would propose that this is a better answer to the critic of well maintained lawns than attempting to defend a practice that needs no defending. Where naturalistic grounds are desired, plant seed that will produce a landscape worth having. The average lawn can never be more than an unkempt lawn. We certainly can do better.

#### 7- International Markets

The International Turfgrass Society has done much to bring together research and education throughout the world during the past 15 years. Our landscape concepts are relatively young compared with those of other countries. Yet, the United States and Canada have advanced turfgrass research in significant ways over a fifty year period.

The development of international markets is the logical outcome of all this. The Lawn Institute, as an international organization has the potential for helping to

improve marketing communications on a broader scale. Education is believed to be the key element needed at this time. Consideration should be given to the development of specially prepared information pieces that would aid those in other countries to make more and better use of seed and equipment and products.

#### B. Lawn Care Professionalism

Lawn seed, fertilizer, pesticide and equipment companies have helped to generate confidence and respect on the part of the consumer public. The Lawn Institute really represents the total industry and, as such, must maintain working relationships with all aspects. This is important for us in both research and education efforts.

For example, lawn renovation provides an opportunity for the consumer to improve the lawn by introducing new cultivars. This practice requires use of chemical growth control materials and/or mechanical devices. Without proper use of these, the new cultivar has little chance of establishment. Thus, in order to have the grass, one must also have the chemical and the equipment. An educational approach to lawn care cannot effectively deal with one without the others.

Thus, The Lawn Institute must develop ways and means to become more closely associated with our allied industries. This would mean opportunities for more effective use of technical information on chemical products and equipment in public education. It would provide for improved communications and joint possibilities for joint support of programs and projects.

A study is currently under way to reevaluate the Institute's interest in and commitment to Product Review. This study will generate recommendations that should be consistent with those policies that guide Variety Review. Through all of this, a consideration of membership potential will be emphasized.

#### C. Lawn Institute Research

Without maintaining plots, The Lawn Institute, through its Director, is in a key position to report on up-to-date advances in turfgrass science and, in addition, contribute professionally by presenting new and creative interpretations based on broad perspectives of current research.

In addition, the Institute should assist in maintaining communications between private seed interests and public cultivar evaluation programs and projects. Tests and trials conducted according to standard procedures at varying climatic locations across the country are of critical importance in obtaining information on turfgrass performance. Test cooperators need not know much about new materials being evaluated. However, as evaluations continue, they should be informed of plans for release or discard. This would allow for additional studies where appropriate.

Emphasis on new cultivars by both public and private plant breeders is encouraging. Cooperation between geneticists, genetic engineers, tissue culture specialists, germplasm collectors and evaluators leads to the conclusion that there is a bright future for lawn and turfgrasses. The Lawn Institute Variety Review Board holds a position of importance and respect in this area.

In order to keep Agricultural Experiment Stations better informed of Lawn Institute activity and contributions to turfgrass research, ways and means should be worked out to increase the Better Lawn Harvests mailing list by approximately one hundred (Number of Turfgrass Scientists). A similar increase in Harvests release should be made to accommodate Turfgrass scientists in industry.

#### D. Learning of Lawns

Of all plant communities appropriate for study of ecosystems, the lawn is more familiar to most people than any other type. By varying means, The Lawn Institute's prime function has been helping people learn about lawns. This has been done well and the need continues. The following items have been identified as important in helping us to do a better job:

##### 1- National Garden Bureau

In many respects The Lawn Institute and The National Garden Bureau have similar goals and objectives. Just as we are concerned with best lawngrasses, they have interest in best flowers and vegetables. Both groups are motivated to helping gardeners enjoy the residential landscape. Communications between the Bureau and Institute should be excellent and ways and means for cooperative effort should be developed. The future for both organizations is promising.

## 2- Radio Tapes

Proposals have been made for The Lawn Institute release short public service tapes for radio. This need will be studied and ways and means determined for project activation.

## 3- Slide Sets

Technical slide sets on turfgrasses have been released by the American Society of Agronomy. These have not been developed for the general public. Prentice-Hall Media has a set of film strips on Turfgrass Management. This brand new, six part audiovisual program is designed for high school and college students. The prospects for The Lawn Institute developing a series of slide sets on Lawn Care would seem worthy of further investigation.

## 4- Radio and Television Commentary on Turf at Sports Events

Ways and means of introducing information on turf playing surfaces during broadcasts of baseball, football, and golf events would be worthy of further consideration. The Lawn Institute may be in a position to develop contacts in this area.

## 5- Press Kits

At present, The Lawn Institute releases two Press Kits to garden writers each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Consideration is being given to expanding the mailing list to include both northern and southern regions, but consolidating spring and fall material into one mailing. Advantages and disadvantages of this proposal are being studied.

## 6- Magazine Articles

The Lawn Institute will continue to release lawn and turf related articles to major landscape and garden magazines. The value of reprints is being reviewed. Perhaps only one or two articles should be reprinted each year. These would be made only because of some well recognized industry or public need.



## 7- Special Topic Writing

Consideration is being given to the development of a series of leaflets and fact sheets to be used for specific well defined audiences. The following topics represent types of presentations under consideration:

- Bluegrasses
- Fine Fescues
- Bentgrasses
- Turf type Tall Fescues
- Perennial Ryegrasses
- Seeded grasses for the Sunbelt
- Sports Turf (for International Market)
- Sports Turf- Play Safe (for Local Market)
- Landscape Ecology (Cartoon booklets or Leaflets)
- Soil Stabilization and Erosion Control

## 8- Institute Logo and Seal of Approval

The Lawn Institute, at the present time, does not make good use of either its Logo or its Seal of Approval. The Seal of Approval is used on some, but not all, containers of Proprietary seed. The Seal and the Logo appear in some advertisements. However, in general, much more should be done to increase exposure of The Institute name, Logo and Seal. This is not a simple matter. Advertising expertise is required. We should make more effort in this area.

## 9- Grass Seed Well Suited for Meeting Local Needs

Estimates indicate that some fifty percent of the lawn seed sold in many market areas is not well suited for the development of satisfactory lawn turf. The consumer is influenced by price and often purchases seed not well adapted to local conditions. They are influenced by the picture on the package more than by any appreciation for ingredients. The seed industry must provide what the consumer will purchase. The moral of this story is, The Lawn Institute has a public relations-education job to do. There must be ways and means to achieve an improved consumer understanding of the value of quality lawn seed. The Institute is dedicated to this cause.

## E. Public Relations

The Lawn Institute enjoys an enviable reputation. Twenty five years of service to the lawn and garden public has

yielded results for which all seedsmen should be proud. However, public relations is a continuing process. The following opportunities are considered worthy of study and new effort:

### 1- Selling the Concept of Seed Use

Selling is defined in many different ways. In simplest terms, it is just a matter of letting another person have your way. They must have a feeling for the complexity of Proprietary seed development, production, quality control and marketing without getting bogged down in detail. They must picture the importance of the residential landscape in quality of life terms. And they must experience the satisfaction gained from close association with living plants. All of us are part of this continuing effort.

### 2- Lawn Institute Funding

Funding of all ventures is based on principles of good public relations. In this instance, the public may be Institute membership or potential members. The public may be individuals and/or firms interested in New Directions, New Programs and New Methods of support for the Institute. The public may be influenced by a realization of the value of the lawn and turfgrass product and service line in the United States (many billions of dollars a year), and desire to support research and education in this area. The public may be responsive to an improved understanding of the goals and purposes of The Lawn Institute through exposure to Better Lawn - Harvests. Or the public may be introduced to the Institute and its program through contact with the Director at Turf Conferences or Trade shows, or with members of the Institute in the course of regular business activity.

However it comes about, public relations is everybody's business and we must all be part of the act. The cause is well worth the effort.

#### IV REPORTS FROM PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND SOCIETIES

(Feature presentations based on keynote addresses)

##### The Politics of Landscape Horticulture

How can members of The Lawn Institute make a positive contribution to the decision making process that influences landscape characteristics, including the development and maintenance of lawns and gardens? What decision making process is it that we should consider worthy of our time and effort? In order to answer these two questions, it is important to step back away from the lawn and garden and consider a related topic. That is, how do we establish quality of life criteria that include all of the many aspects that contribute to our standard of living?

##### The Politics of Conservation

In effect, this is what the members of The Soil Conservation Society of America did at their 1982 annual meeting. They considered the politics of conservation in some detail. The questions asked them were similar to the three asked here: "How can SCSA members make a positive contribution to resource decision-making?"; "Being recipients of a greater than average share of our natural resources, what can we do, what should we do, as members of an international organization dedicated to advancing the science and art of good land use?"; As members of an organization concerned about natural resources, do we have an opportunity, as well as a responsibility, to make political decision-makers aware of alternatives and help them understand what happens if various resource decisions are or are not made?"; "If we who understand about resources don't advise and influence decision makers, who will?"; "Do we want someone else to supply this leadership?" These questions were asked by SCSA President Robert C. Baum of Salem, Oregon. He concluded by saying, "The attitude of society leaders and members is important. We need to promote a positive outlook."

##### The Democratic Process

The decision making process in this country involves each and every citizen. Democracy is a contact sport, not a spectator sport. The players are the elected officials charged with the responsibility for making decisions, and the public who influence the decisions being made. Both

elected officials and public serve in different ways and are important to us in advancing the cause of Landscape Horticulture.

Basically the argument here is that its constituents demand. In the jungle often prevails. However, this is no more true than for society as a whole. Votes count. In a democracy government is not the problem, as we may like to indicate; it is the answer, the people's tool. It can do what individuals cannot do individually. Government is the art of the possible.

### Anatomy and Physiology of Politics

We all need to spend some time exploring carefully the anatomy and physiology of politics because this is the life blood of a democracy. So often the word politics brings forth the issue of partisan affairs and this limits full appreciation of how this decision making process works. Politics may be scorned as a necessary evil associated with a world dominated by greed and ambition. We hear and use the terms "political rhetoric", "quick political fix" and "political year" in less than complimentary circumstances. In such instances, we do ourselves substantial disservice by simply misunderstanding and underrating a process that has for us so much benefit associated with it.

Politics is the process that determines what is possible to accomplish, considering certain issues at a particular time. This process is facilitated by the creation of political parties. There is a provision for these in our formal government structure. Political parties are formed to present the ideal. They have been described by Philip M. Glick, Attorney from Chevy Chase, Maryland, as "wild flowers in our society grown in common soil to serve human needs". In addition and perhaps most important politics has the task of maintaining a continued flow of communication between people and their elected representatives in government. This communication should include current evaluations and up-dating concerning quality of life and those related elements, including Landscape Horticulture, that contribute to development of satisfying habitats.

## Flavor of Politics

Much has been written about our government and political system. Perhaps the true flavor comes through the realization that each of the following points contribute to its unique method of operation.

- Legislative government maintains a reactive posture. It has a great knee-jerk reaction. It is good at putting out fires.
- The Second Law of Politics states that for every action there is an immediate reaction.
- Politics is essentially a process where people come together to resolve their differences.
- Politics often brings adjustments, compromises and exemptions.
- In politics it doesn't matter who is right, but all depends on the analysts point of view. All data is subject to varying interpretation.
- Often the real challenge is not related to political partisanship but to the politics of professionalism.
- Politicians need facts and figures, not causes.
- Politicians avoid being put in the middle. They want to work with homogeneous groups that act together. Experts must get their act together before searching out support.
- Political commitment is simply votes. These must be based on solid public commitment and this founded on an intellectual understanding of the facts.
- Logic means little if you don't have the votes.
- It doesn't take much confusion to put a program on the hit list.
- There is a basic rule that a politician never leads a parade down main street if no one is following.
- If you like sausage or politics, don't watch either being made.

## Public Attitudes and Politics

Thus, it is clear that the decision making process, wherever it is, reflects the political system. The attitudes of local citizens regarding parks and recreation facilities, community pride in landscape achievements and importance of neighborhood lawns and gardens are subject to political influences.

Not all of us have the same values. This is particularly true in the United States where we have immigrated for many different reasons: peace and freedom, participation in social affairs, wealth, security, power, enjoyment of an open experimental society or belonging to a more authoritarian life style. These varying values create tensions and this helps to explain why some of our political action is harsh or cruel. People see and interpret the world differently and yet live together with hope for the future.

In effect, we are what we are because our physical make-up - genes - have no values, standards or patterns, but it is our society that modifies our makeup to bring forth a sense of ethics. We are involved in a constant struggle between nature and nurture. Thus, some of us may place more emphasis on landscaping than others. We feel a greater tie to living plants and the culture of lawns and gardens. We desire to live in neighborhoods where others have similar values.

Others of us may enjoy apartment life, separated from the garden environment. Their values are recognized as more important. The condominium often offers an opportunity to enjoy the freedom of apartment type living along with community property that is well landscaped and enjoyable for outdoor living.

Also, values are influenced by economic factors. Certain human needs must be met or satisfied first before higher orders of need are considered.

Our values are continually influenced by outside factors including others about us. These influencing factors are part of an ongoing decision making process that makes us vital in the politics of everyday life.

## What is America Thinking

As seedsmen interested in the Lawn and Turf Industry, we must know what the real American is thinking. It is

important for us to talk sense about lawns and gardens. It is necessary to build public support on a valid intellectual framework as well as insight. The public must want lawns in order to have them. As long as people are unaware of the possible, they cannot care. What is possible for them depends on the decisions we make to increase their awareness.

Opinions are the basis of decision making. We all have opinions. How useful are they? An opinion not communicated is only a thought. An opinion communicated poorly is merely speculation. An opinion communicated too late is a complaint. An opinion not based on true knowledge is a danger. An opinion based on well founded facts can be a determining factor and a reasonable opinion communicated at the appropriate time is truly valuable and important, because opinions are what politics is all about.

Thus, it is important to us what people think about the landscape. We have well defined concepts related to the value of lawns and gardens. These must be explained to those we expect to influence. The whole picture has to be viewed; relationships and interrelationships need to be brought together. It is not just a shrub or a flower or a lawn, it is the whole garden that must be brought to life. When this happens, an informed public develops an entirely different opinion than that of the uninformed public. Public participation in this process, then is not a frill, it is a necessity.

#### A Working Public Opinion

The following random points provide additional insight towards the working public opinion and participation in the decision making process:

- Communications cannot be taken for granted. It's a selling matter where the recipient is an unfamiliar urban population that has lost its ties with the soil.
- Effective communication leads to public participation and an increase in awareness.
- There is a strong feeling on the part of many people that technology will solve all problems.
- We have access to the best technical expertese in the world; we are in need of increasing emphasis on communications.

- If we have a good idea but people do not understand the technology, a good idea may come of it.
- Often the highly technical explanation covers everything except its application to practical lawn care.
- You can't any more do what you don't know how, than you can come from where you ain't never been.
- Individual voices expressing concern or asking questions are difficult to hear when so many are talking at once.
- Groups expressing concern or asking questions are more readily heard and their needs more readily considered.
- Without a firm intellectual base, there is seldom a real public commitment.
- It is difficult for people to distinguish between fact and fiction.
- Speakers and writers tell the truth as they see it.
- A professional consensus must be presented as the basis for political commitment.
- Professional or business infighting causes significant weakness to the advancement of any issue.
- Lack of professional or business unity creates questions on information output and this causes a further questioning of the honesty, integrity and objectivity of those who work up the data. This threatens policy and damage programs. What are the conflicts in position, interest, or goals?
- When the public sense that experts don't agree or have the same facts, the result is loss of confidence.
- Often the cause of the disagreement is the existence of two different answers for two different questions, rather than two different answers for the same question.
- Duplication of effort also helps destroy public confidence- too many cooks spoil the soup.
- There is a need to couple responsibility with opportunity.
- Ethics as well as economics are required.



- Those who constantly stick their heads in the sand will never leave their footprints on the sands of time.

#### What's In It For Us

The politics of landscape horticulture is the reality of competition between plant use related products and other products that contribute to quality of life. It is a competition for ideas that interest people and stimulate their imagination. It is a process whereby trends are set that influence others in the development of life style patterns. It is guided by local, state and national government in so far as plants are used to enhance our environment.

The issue is clear, we have a stake in the decision making process that influences landscape characteristics. This decision making process involves a wide sector of our population, as they influence one another and as they support government trend setting programs.

The Lawn Institute is supportive of those educational efforts sponsored by all segments of the industry that are designed to conserve soil and water resources and in so doing create residential landscapes for the best in living. We encourage the seed trade in its continuing program of public relations-education that places emphasis on landscape quality as important to the realization of The American Dream. We believe that your involvement in the challenging area of politics of Landscape Horticulture will be satisfying as the benefits of this effort spread from local neighborhoods to towns and cities to states and nations. The process is underway and its well worth continuing.

#### More Information on The Politics of Conservation

This report was based on a series of papers presented at the 37th Annual Meeting of The Soil Conservation Society of America. For more information about SCSA and the speakers who contributed to this program, write to: SCSA, 7515 Northeast Ankeny Road, Ankeny, Iowa 50021.

V. P. O. BOX 108

(Comments welcome, all worth repeating)

Public interest in New Perennial Ryegrasses is riding high. Over one hundred letters have been received from the Cleveland, Ohio area in response to a newspaper article on the use of these grasses. Additional information, including Dr. Schery's reprint on "Autumn Lawns" has been provided each.

#### VI. READERS FORUM

(News and views from the membership )

We look forward to using this space to present news and views from readers of Harvests. From time to time let us have your thoughts on current trends and issues. This provides us all with an opportunity to share in the enthusiasm or concern that is part of the lawn and turf seed trade.

#### VII. QUARTERLY PROGRAM REPORT

(Institute progress and achievement)

Since July 1 The Lawn Institute has made the move from Ohio to Tennessee. Essentially the same amount of floor space and storage facilities are available and the office is set up to accept the same sorts of things that came out of Marysville.

Evaluations of Institute programs and projects are being made with the objective of determining future direction. A tour through parts of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Minnesota was designed to provide visits with some members of the Institute. These were most useful in the evaluative process. Visits with members in other parts of the country are planned as we move forward.

The first issue of Harvests from the new location has presented an opportunity to release more on the philosophy and substance of The Lawn Institute as we move into the second quarter century. As we get brought up-to-date from our move that has involved changing magazine and journal subscriptions and the impact of our new mailing address on correspondence in general, we look forward to working closely with you in behalf of better lawns and turf.

## VIII ITINERARY

(Travel, meetings attended and contacts made)

- July 6 - Final details on completion of office building in Pleasant Hill.
- July 19-21 - Moved office from Marysville to Pleasant Hill
- August 8-11 - Soil Conservation Society of America Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana
- August 16-20 - Moved from Rhode Island to Tennessee
- August 29 - September 4 - Tour of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Minnesota.

### Visits and Meetings included:

- The Jacklin Seed Company; Post Falls, Idaho
  - E.F. Burlingham and Sons; Forest Grove, Oregon
  - Turf Seed Research Farm; Hubbard, Oregon
  - Ag Services; Salem, Oregon
  - Luncheon Meeting at Ag Services
  - Great Western Seed; Albany, Oregon
  - Northrup King and Company; Tangent, Oregon
  - Barbecue Meeting at Bryant Park; Albany, Oregon
  - Pickseed West; Tangent, Oregon
  - International Seeds; Halsey, Oregon
  - Oregon State University Seed Laboratory; Corvallis, Oregon
  - Western Washington Experiment Station; Puyallup, Washington
  - Northrup King and Company; Minneapolis, Minnesota
- September 14 - Meetings with Ornamental Horticulture faculty at the University of Tennessee

## IX LOOKING AHEAD

( Plans for the future )

- November 3 - 5 - Atlantic Seedsmen's Association Meeting  
Williamsburg, Virginia
- Meeting of The Lawn Institute Executive Committee

November 9-11 - New York State Turfgrass Conference

Presented two papers:

"Turfgrasses for Athletic Uses "

"Low Maintenance Lawns - Are They  
the Future ? "

November 12 - Visit to Lofts Seed Inc, Bound Brook, NJ

November 28 - December 3 - American Society of Agronomy  
meetings, Anaheim, California

December 6-7 - Oregon Seed Growers League, Portland,  
Oregon

- Present paper:

"Lawn Seed Fit for a Global Market"

Note; Other visits and meetings are being scheduled to  
make trips more cost effective.

#### X THRESHING THE JOURNALS

( Review of current turfgrass research literature)

Space in this issue of Harvests does not permit the  
presentation of a complete updating of the available  
literature. In this review is included to illus-  
trate format of the

Dudeck A E and J B Sartain 1982 Yield and Nutrient  
Accumulation of Tifway Bermudagrass and Overseeded  
Ryegrass as Influenced by Applied Nutrients. Agronomy  
Journal 74:3, 488-491.

Medalist II (a mixture of Pennfine and NK 100 cultivars  
of perennial ryegrass) was seeded over dormant Tifway  
bermudagrass on a loamy fine sand in Florida in mid  
November. A seeding rate of 122 grams per square meter  
(25 pounds per 1000 square feet) was used. Ammonium  
nitrate, ordinary superphosphate, potassium sulfate  
and magnesium sulfate treatments were made. Ryegrass  
growth was evaluated during the cool season and the  
bermudagrass during the following warm season. Accep-  
table turfgrass quality was not obtained when less than  
20 grams nitrogen per square meter per 8 weeks (4 lbs  
N/1000 sq.ft/ 8 weeks) was applied. More disease and

lower quality turf was observed at lower nitrogen treatments. Bermudagrass had a higher rate of dry tissue yield than the ryegrass at the different nitrogen levels. Ryegrass responded to phosphorus applied at a rate of 5 g/m<sup>2</sup> (1 lb/1000 sq ft) every 12 weeks on turf soil. Soil contained a minimum of 82 parts per million (about 3.5 lbs P/1000 sq ft). Bermudagrass did not respond favorably to the added phosphorus. Both grasses needed extra potassium, 10 g/m<sup>2</sup> (2 lbs/1000 sq ft) when nitrogen was used at the rate of 20 g N/m<sup>2</sup> (4 lbs N/1000 sq ft). The potassium level in the soil was 33 parts per million (about 1.5 lbs K per 1000 sq ft). A level of 60 parts per million magnesium in the soil (about 2.5 lbs Mg/1000 sq ft) was adequate for the growth of both grasses even though the calcium : magnesium ratio in some instances exceeded 20:1. Ryegrass accumulated more nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and magnesium at each level of nitrogen fertilization than bermudagrass. Excluding phosphorus tended to reduce the nitrogen percentage in ryegrass tissue, but increased the nitrogen percentage in bermudagrass. (These differences illustrate the importance of adjusting fertilizer practice, in so far as possible, to meet the requirements of both bermudagrass and overseeded ryegrass.)

#### XI SCORE CARD

(Presentation of research data and conclusions from Turfgrass fielddays and conferences)

Reports will be included in forthcoming issues of Harvests.

#### XII RESEARCH SYNTHESIS

(Analysis of research reports and interpretation of results)

Analyses of research reports will be presented in forthcoming issues of Harvests.