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GREEN SECTION

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NORTHEASTERN TURFLETTER

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WATER -- USE IT WISELY

This year at the Rutgers Turf Week much emphasis was placed on the topic of water and its importance in growing fine turf -- and rightly so! Water management is one of the most important phases of turf management.

July and August are the most difficult months for bentgrass turf areas -- putting greens in particular. During this period diseases, insects, high temperatures and high humidity join forces to make things as uncomfortable as possible for superintendents.

If asked to single out one specific practice that accelerates or lessens turf loss or injury in July and August we would say water management. Take for example the green situated in a pocketed area where the temperature and humidity are much higher than any other green on the course. Could you afford to chance the same amount of water here as applied to other greens? Certainly not; the turf couldn't take it.

How much water should be applied to greens? This is a problem which each superintendent must work out for himself. Each green on the course is different from the rest; the amount of water applied at a time varies from week to week with climatic changes; management practices dictate differences in watering technique; water absorption differs on each green; sloped, mounded, or terraced greens require special handling; soils differ from one green to the next - and ad infinitum. It is only after all these factors have been considered that an intelligent watering program can be set up.

When July and August roll around with their problems, superintendents who are short-staffed in early season and were forced to water by sprinkler previously make certain that water is applied carefully and uniformly by hand in July and August. Slopes and mounds are watered more than low areas -- the high spots receive most water; the low spots "take care of themselves."

Some superintendents use a sub-irrigator on mounds or slopes to good advantage in July and August. High spots tend to dry quickly, and once the soil beneath dries it is very difficult to re-wet it again. Use of the sub-irrigator on trouble spots has helped keep the soils from drying; hence the turf on these greens doesn't begin to wilt so quickly.

Water technique in fine turf culture is an exacting problem always, but during July and August the problem is ever so much more acute. Water correctly, water cautiously and water judiciously. Water management is one of the most important phases of turf management. Learn all you can about it. Study water requirements for your specific conditions. It pays big dividends in fine turf.

GETTING 2,4-D OUT OF EQUIPMENT

The residual effect of 2,4-D in spray equipment can cause serious trouble. If you have used 2,4-D in an oil spray the equipment should be rinsed with kerosene. If a water spray or 2,4-D was used, a dilute solution of washing soda should be rinsed through the spraying gear. Further rinsing with warm water and soap is recommended. Acetone and ammonia water are other 2,4-D solvents found useful. One-half ounce of trisodium phosphate to a gallon of water has also been found effective.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question.--Much of my beautiful bent was ruined last summer from Pythium. Is there any control for it? (North Carolina)

Answer.--This is a toughy! Experiment stations and fungicide companies have no satisfactory control for Pythium so far as we know. Wells and Robinson report Actidione, PMAS, and Tersan plus PMAS sprays reduced the disease activity on ryegrass but were not sufficiently satisfactory to recommend as control measures. More work must be done on Pythium.

Pythium occurs during periods of high temperature and high humidity. When it strikes it looks very much like dollarspot infestation except that its usual pattern is a streak of spots in an irregular pattern. The spots usually enlarge within that pattern under severe attack until most of the turf within the pattern dies out.

Question.--What is the difference between Penncross and Pennlu? (New York)

Answer.--Pennlu is an improved creeping bentgrass selection developed and released by the Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station. It is a vegetative bentgrass; increase must be made through the planting of stolons, runners, or sods of the parent material. Pennlu is reported to have performed consistantly better than other bentgrass selections at the Pennsylvania Station in density, disease tolerance, vigor, texture, and ability to withstand a wide temperature range. (By Prof. H. B. Musser.)

Penncross is an improved creeping bentgrass selection that was developed by Prof. H. B. Musser of the Pennsylvania State University. Penncross turf is developed from seed. Penncross seed is grown by planting three separate select vegetative creeping bentgrass strains side by side and allowing them to go to seed. During this time cross-pollination takes place and the result is Penncross seed.

Penncross seed production is the job of qualified commercial seed producers who must conform with rigid state and federal regulations.

Question.--I aerated late this season (in June) and I am having difficulty in getting some of the holes to close over. There is no definite pattern or arrangement of the holes that fail to close, just a few here or there. Could you tell me why? (Rhode Island)

Answer.--The Chances are good that there is some cutworm activity going on. Aeration holes are perfect hiding places for cutworms and other insects that feed on roots in and around aeration holes, thus weakening the grass. This keeps the holes from closing over.

When early summer aeration is necessary always follow up with an insecticide treatment. If chlordane is used, one-fourth to one-third the normal rate, applied after aeration or when cutworm activity is noticed, will take care of these pests. If new broods develop, repeated treatments at this same reduced rate will be necessary.

TURF FIELD DAYS

August 2, 1955 Rutgers Field Day, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J. Leader -- Dr. Ralph E. Engel

August 10, 1955 Rhode Island Field Day, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R. I. Leader -- Dr. Jesse De France

Plan to attend the Field Days to view the latest developments in turf research. The turf plots at these institutions have long been established and are a landmark in the development of finer turf in the Northeast. Mark your calendar now and plan to bring a friend or two with you.

WEATHER MAKES HEADLINES!

This year to date we have had difficult turf growing weather in the Northeast. Spring started cold and windy (favoring Poa annua); May was the driest since 1908 (favoring clover); June was good in most of the Northeastern states (rain fell weekly); July started off with a bang! 90°+ weather for a full 9 days! The Herald Tribune of July 7 carried the headline, "5th Day; 91.1; Little Hope Before Sunday."

What chance does a little old grass plant have unless it is in a healty condition?

Northeastern Turfletter

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