



UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION  
GREEN SECTION  
Southwestern Office

Texas A & M College  
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*File*

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Southwestern Turfletter

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DISEASE CONTROL

Two monthly meetings of the Oklahoma Turfgrass Association have had as their theme "Proper Approach to Disease Control for 1956." Several items which were discussed may be worth your thinking about.

Iron sulfate or iron chelates may not be fungicides, but they do help the grass to maintain a vigor that makes it less susceptible to such diseases as Pythium and Curvularia.

There is a tendency for diseases to occur in a complex, where it is difficult to determine which organism is causing the trouble. In such a case, a mixture of several fungicides may be necessary for control.

Curvularia produces serious damage, but it usually occurs where grass has first been injured or weakened by some other agency. It may attack grass which is injured by bruising or fertilizer burn or it may follow wilting, chlorosis, or an attack of some other disease organism.

Several of the improved strains of bentgrass are much more resistant to diseases than is Seaside.

GOOD ADVICE

J. L. Jennings, Superintendent of River Oaks Country Club in Houston, made the following observation during a recent talk before the members of the Gulf Coast Region of the Texas Turfgrass Association. These may not be Jim's exact words but they convey his thoughts.

"I don't believe people would ever deliberately mislead me when they suggest rates and methods of application of weed control materials. However, they might not understand my practices or the nature of my turf. They may inadvertently quote me the wrong rates or I might not hear correctly. To be safe, I always experiment a little on a nursery area so that I know what's going to happen."

## MONDO GRASS

Numerous advertisements have appeared recently in newspapers and garden publications concerning "Blue green Mondo grass." Following these advertisements several golf course superintendents have had members inquire of them about this plant. The following statement, published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, may be of interest:

### Lily-Turf (Ophiopogon Spp.) - Mondo Grass

F. V. Juska <sup>1/</sup>

Mondo is the old generic name for the genus Ophiopogon, commonly referred to as lily-turf or snake's beard. It is a semi-tropical oriental plant originally introduced into the United States by the U.S.D.A. from Tang hsi, China, in 1906. Two species, japonicus and Jaburan are well known in cultivation. The last named species is used chiefly as a greenhouse foliage plant growing from 1-1/2 to 3 feet tall.

#### Characteristics and Uses:

Mondo or Ophiopogon japonicus is not a grass but a low growing evergreen perennial closely related to the lily-of-the-valley. The grass-like leaves are 1/8 of an inch wide, rather rigid, 6-12 inches long and have a tendency to droop. Small violet or bluish-tinged flowers are produced, followed by pale blue berries. The stemless tufted plants spread by means of underground stems and tuberous-thickened roots and are thus readily propagated by division.

Research is somewhat limited, but evidence indicates that the Ophiopogon species are winter-hardy in the Washington, D. C. area, although browning of the leaves may occur beginning with the tip extending an inch or more downward. Further south the plant remains green the year-round. This genus is shade tolerant and needs no mowing when used as a ground cover, where a height of 6-12 inches is not objectionable.

The Ophiopogon species are not recommended for general lawn purposes. They are used as a ground cover under shade trees, terraces, rock gardens, edgings, borders, and other areas where a grass cover cannot be grown satisfactorily. Since the plant is drought tolerant in humid regions, it may be planted on steep banks and terraces for erosion control.

The plant recovers slowly when mowed. Removal of the top portion of the leaf exposes an open unsightly "sod" that may thin out further if mowing is continued. Lily-turf has been largely used for borders and edgings in Italy and southern France and is being used for the same purpose in some of the Southern States.

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<sup>1/</sup> U.S.D.A. Research Agronomist

HOW DO YOU CONTROL JACK RABBITS?

The prolonged drouth throughout much of the Southwest has contributed to a serious and unusual golf course problem. Jack rabbits are coming from miles around to get a meal of green grass from golf courses. They have gnawed the close-clipped putting green turf into the ground on some courses.

Several West Texas clubs have reported killing more than 100 rabbits a night by use of shotguns and .22 rifles. H. B. Wesley, of Midland Country Club, estimates that more than 6,000 rabbits were killed on his golf course in the three months between Christmas and the 20th of March. While shooting is effective, it is not efficient.

In correspondence, Mr. R. E. Callender, Specialist in Wildlife Conservation, says "Poison salt is sometimes very effective in destroying rabbits. One ounce of strychnine alkaloid to 1-1/2 to 2 pounds of salt is suggested. On small jobs, we often recommend that 1 to 1-1/2 inch holes be bored in 2 x 4 blocks approximately 1 inch deep and that the salt be placed in the blocks and distributed around where the rabbits are doing damage. It would be necessary, of course, to try the rabbits out on untreated salt first to determine whether or not they would take it in sufficient quantities to warrant this method."

A formula for preparing poison bait for rabbits follows:

POISONING RABBITS

For poisoning rabbits in winter or during seasons of drought the following formula is recommended:

12 quarts good oats	1 ounce soda (bicarbonate)
1 ounce powdered strychnine	1/8 ounce saccharine
1 tablespoon laundry starch	1 quart water

Mix the starch with 1/2 pint of cold water. Pour this into 1-1/2 pints of boiling water and continue the boiling for a minute or two until the starch is clear. Mix the dry strychnine and soda in a small pan and sift it over the hot starch, stirring thoroughly to form a smooth paste. Add the saccharine and stir again. Pour the mixture over the oats to dry before distributing. Not over a tablespoon of the grain should be put in a single bait and this should be scattered considerably. A little alfalfa hay will help attract rabbits to the poisoned grain. This poison is recommended for use when snow covers the ground. It is effective against both cottontails and large rabbits.

Partly ripened heads of barley or wheat soaked in a solution of strychnine and saccharine or coated with the starch - strychnine solution just described have also proved effective baits for rabbits but GREAT CARE MUST BE EXERCISED IN USING THEM, AS THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE EATEN BY LIVESTOCK.

If any of our readers have other suggestions for the control of jack rabbits we should appreciate their sharing the information with the others who are having difficulty.

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