

TURFCOMMS



V. 5, I. 8

AUG. 10, '90

PURPOSE: To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

BANNER - Ciba-Geigy waters it down, puts a blue dye in it, gets a new label calling it ALAMO and sells it for the equivalent of \$5,678 per gallon was one persons comment. The Texas Commissioner of Agriculture calls it "the most blatant consumer rip-off we have ever seen in dealing with pesticides in Texas", writes Corby in the July/August Texas Gardener. Some other comments I've heard have been unprintable.

What is ALAMO labeled for? Oak wilt, a serious disease of live oaks in the Hill Country of Texas. Banner is becoming in short supply in that area. There appears to be some question as to who is responsible for the shortage. Are you having trouble obtaining Banner in your area? Is Ciba-Geigy trying to sell ALAMO in the same area?

KANSAS TURF FIELD DAY - Every time I get anywhere near West Kansas I hear about ants being a problem. Those with this problem might try Tempo. Not only does it provide control at relatively low rates but, THE IPM PRACTITIONER March 1989, issue notes that the WP formulation is a very effective repellent at least for the Argentine Ant.

Bermudagrass Winter Hardiness - My main interest at the field day was the winter hardiness trials. We had just experienced a major winter kill from Houston north to Kansas and east thru Tenn. The Wichita station reported Guymon, A-29, E-29 and Midiron appeared to survive the best. At Manhattan and at Wichita, Texturf 10,

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A-22 and Vamont survived in fair to good shape. My slides show also at least one plot of Tufcote that made it thru at Manhattan.

Kansas state is promising to release one of the three proven experimentals (A-29, E-29 or A-22) some time soon. These cultivars have proven to be very cold tolerant and fine to medium in texture.

Gymon is a coarse textured seeded cultivar that is hard for me to get excited about. Great pasture grass! NuMex Sierra, another new seeded cultivar, has some what better quality than Gymon but, not its winter hardiness.

Zoysia Patch - This troublesome disease was particularly severe in the Kansas City area this spring because of the cool wet weather that stayed on thru May. Dr. Ned Tisserat, KS State Plant Pathologist, noted that Zoysia Patch develops in the fall with a fiery reddish orange yellow ring. He disagrees with Houston Couch that a Rhizoctonia is causing the disease, although Tisserat is quick to admit he has not found the cause. He is looking closely at Ophiosphaerella herpotricha and Gaeumannomyces incrustans as causal agents.

Fall applications of Banner, Rubigan or a new material, Links, are providing some control.

Water Absorbing Polymers - By now you have probably seen countless advertizements and had a sample or two of these new starch-like polymers that absorb 100 to 300 times their weight in water. All the research with them that I have seen to date has failed to justify their use for practical turf establishment or maintenance.

Some research recently begun at Kansas indicates they may be of use plowed into athletic fields. Their use there may provide a softer and thus safer playing surface for football. At \$3.50 a pound of dry material and a five year life expectance they are hard to get very excited about even for that use.

Two new preemerges looked promising, Dimension and Premier. The former may be helpful in Poa annua control.

Two, Control Droplet Applicators (CDAs) were demonstrated, the Herbi and the Expedite. These devices both work as gravity feed, ultra low volume sprayers with battery operated spin plates to propel the droplets in a spray pattern. They will almost cover an acre with a gallon of spray mix.

The Expidite is a Monsanto product which requires you to buy premixed sprays from them. The Herbi I'm not as familiar with but, it allows you to mix you own sprays in a one gallon jug and otherwise is similar to the Expidite.

TGR AND UPDATE - An O.M. Scott's technical representative whom I have a lot of faith in said that successful Poa annua control was only being obtained by the superintendents he visits when they used TGR at full rate spring and fall. This would agree with the comments I'm generally hearing that TGR isn't working. It isn't when used at 1/2 rate.

University research is also showing Poa annua germination six weeks after TGR applications in the spots left bare by death of Poa in fairway experiments. Betasan (bensulide) applications five weeks after TGR applications would do much to prevent that from occurring. Thus TGR followed by betasan may be a combination that will reduce Poa populations on greens. Or three or four 1/2 rates of TGR.

TREE PLANTING - If you haven't got around to reading the June issue of Golf Course Management be sure to do so before you plant trees this fall. Page 12 tells of new guidelines for planting trees from the American Forestry Association. This combined with material I have gathered from Carl Whitcomb's books and talks makes a lot of sense to me.

Tree planting on golf courses is often an important fall job. Following the above mentioned guidelines may make it more successful. Whitcomb, in his text, Landscape Plant Production, Establishment, and Maintenance emphasizes that the hole for a tree should not be deeper than the ball. You can dig it as wide as you wish he says. The guidelines say five times the balls diameter. Trees dug with a tree spade should not be put in a tree spade dug hole.

Whitcomb gives data from various research experiments that show amendments to the soil at planting time are generally not beneficial and may be harmful. Pine bark being one of the most harmful in the research he discusses. He goes on, pages 300 thru 315 to discuss why. He does note that "Nature places the organic matter only on the soil surface where it serves very effectively as a mulch." When planting trees we should do the same.

In the winter of '81-'82 I moved a three inch caliper pecan tree to a new location in my yard. Remembering what Whitcomb had said about the depth and width of the hole I dug a hole no deeper than the ball but two times its diameter. I than replaced all the soil removed from the hole with my garden soil which was the same type and texture but had a lot of organic matter added to it by the cold compost method over the previous three years. After packing the soil around the ball I than applied a light amount of ammonium nitrate to the soil surface and added two inches of pine bark mulch.

That pecan tree did not suffer anything but very mild transplant shock and grew fairly well that year and has grown rapidly since. I also did not stake the tree or top prune it. Whitcomb says not to and Chandler in HortScience, Vol.25(1), January 1990, provides some more supporting data to the philosophy of not top pruning a transplanted tree.

This fall when I go to plant a replacement tree for my ash tree I will make only one change in the format used for the pecan tree. I'll dig the hole five times the ball's diameter.

What about the players complaints of it being impossible to hit a ball from on top of mulch? TOUGH! Their not suppose to be hitting their ball underneath the tree. RUB OF THE GAME.
Editor.

FERTIGATION - I have always been conditionally in favor of applying fertilizer through the irrigation system IF, that irrigation system was reasonably well designed. Well I just had a superintendent with a single row fairway system tell me fertigation cuts his fertilizer bill four to six thousand and avoids those flushes of growth that get so many superintendents in trouble.

Specifically he mentioned a time this spring when those who put on a second pound of nitrogen on their thin bermudagrass fairways were suddenly baling hay after a period of warm rainy weather got everything growing real good. Those superintendents with bentgrass greens and warm season grass fairways have trouble taking advantage of this tool. But, it is one worth considering and a real plus at establishment time - provided it doesn't rain all the time!

Let me add that the superintendent mentioned above had added numerous heads to that single row system so his system was not as bad as originally designed.

GEOFABRIC WINTER COVERS - Heard of a failure with these. As told to me over the phone the turf was lost in the typical high dry spots that are so often lost in the long dry winters common in the Northern High Plains and for which the fabric was used to prevent in the first place. The covers put on in November were not enough protection in themselves. Although where the fabric was doubled at the seams the turf underneath survived. Flat metal pieces that excluded all light resulted in dead turf.

This was Nebraska on a course that went into the fall very dry, sits up in an exposed location, and had a long dry winter. To be learned from this - winter covers are only partial protection.

END