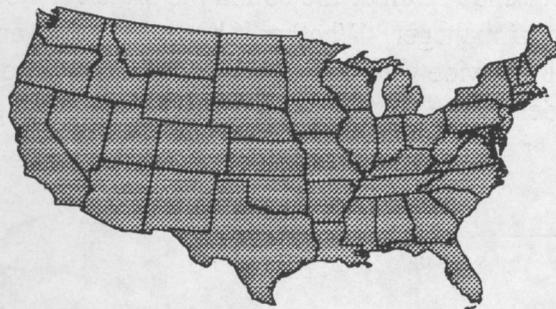


TurfComms

Vol. 8, I. 8



Sept. 14, '95

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

ZOYSIAGRASS MITE: *Eriophyes zoysiae* is his/her name. "It was first described on zoysiagrass accessions introduced into the United States in 1982 from Korea and Japan (Baker et al., 1986)." writes Reinert, et al. in Texas Turfgrass Research of 1992. Well in June of 1993 I saw and took slides of the typical 'buggy whip' symptom of what I then thought was a disease or nutrient deficiency in my lawn. It was very prevalent in the deep shade. A plant pathologist friend at that time said he had never seen a disease or nutrient deficiency like the slides I showed.

The mite causes "extensive growth reduction by producing a leaf curl and failure of the leaf tip to unfold.", writes Reinert. According to greenhouse research conducted by Reinert, the cultivars Meyer and Belair "were among the most susceptible". It sure did a number on my shaded Meyer and it is active again in a much more sunny location this year. That will teach me not to walk on the zoysia selections at the Texas A & M Turfgrass Field Days.

Anyone interested in acquiring some Zoysiagrass mites? I would be only to glad to share them with you.

BERMUDAGRASS - NEW CULTIVAR: Lee Redman, a St. Louis, MO supt., tells me Dr. A.J. Powell, Kentucky's turf extension man, has released a winter hardy reasonably fine textured cultivar found first in that state. Lee said that it is a big hit already in the Greater St. Louis area. The name is Quickstand and it needs four mowings a week to look its best in mid-summer.

TURFCOMMS is published at unpredictable intervals by the editor and publisher:

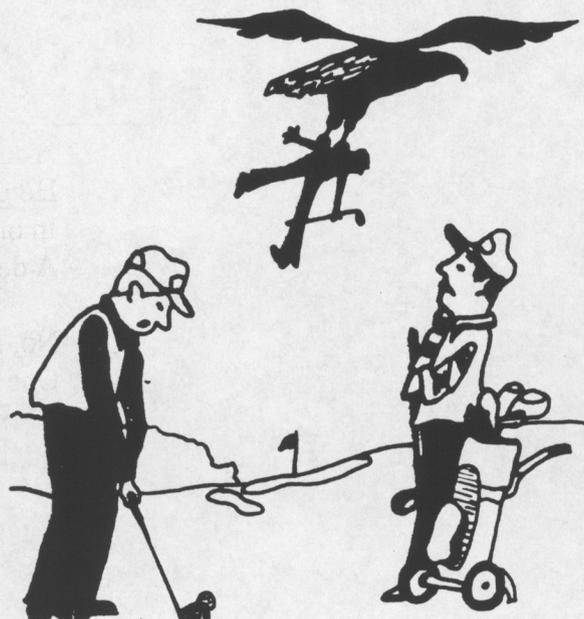
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FROM AN ANONYMOUS DONOR:

*"The superintendent has those hawks
trained to catch gophers, but complain
about the maintenance of the course and ..."*



TURF FOR A FOUR INCH MOWING HEIGHT: Recently I was requested to put together **seeding** specifications for detention ponds at warehouse sites. The goals being monthly mowing, no irrigation or fertilization. The specifications were to vary as needed for locations all over the 48 contiguous states. These specifications tends to get you out of what most of us think of as turf and into forages or roadside turf. You would think that at the higher mowing heights natives would become more practical. They may but in reality the Eurasian and African grasses still definitely are the best choices for most areas using those guidelines. Buffalograss is the main American exception with the gramas and saltgrass a second possibility. Our native grasses and legumes available from seed are not well adapted to even infrequent monthly mowing at four inch height. The few that are, often are either not on the seed market or very expensive.

Agri-Systems of Texas, Inc.: I've been told by a close source that Dr. Marvin Ferguson's old soil testing company is out of business. This is really not surprising I don't see how all those labs out there doing mechanical analysis for putting greens and athletic fields can possibly find enough business for them all to survive.

Also wish to take this space to thank Dr. Eliot Roberts, Dr. Peter McMaugh and James Moore for their letters with comments on TurfComms. Comments from readers helps to keep me going.

IT HAS BEEN SIXTY YEARS: I've had a lot of birthdays since that day just prior to the 4th of July in '35 when I was born. They always kid people about having trouble accepting 40. That wasn't a problem for me but 60 sure didn't come easy. Speaking of 60th birthdays Dr. James Beard just had his. I slipped by the 10th birthday for TurfComms without noting it but, then what is ten years. I'd bet I won't live to see its 60th but no one would take me up on that.

MR. JAMES FRANCIS MOORE: My hats off to this talented man.
For he did write you will see
One fine piece of "poetry" in the
Record of July/August 1995, the USGA's that is.

If you don't get this fine journal shame on you.
Give me a call I'll photocopy my pg. 17 for you.

He tells it like it is --- It's Still Just a Game,
Writes the Director, Mid-Continent Region.

A superintendent was so delighted with it
He gave me a photocopy to read in my leisure.
In one small page Jim has nicely summed up
A decade of visits with country club committees.

No, not the productive ones that are often done
One to one with the superintendent and then perhaps
Summarized at lunch with "the committee in force."
Jim however has described the reverse. He begins:

"I don't know about you, but I'm beginning to fear
That much has been lost from the game we hold dear.
The players, it seems, have made the decision,
The course must be made a thing of precision."

William E. Knoop, Ph.D. : Turfgrass Consultant reads his new business card. He retired from Texas A & M this year with big fan fare and moved to East Texas. We will, I'm sure continue to hear from the originator of the Don't Bag It program.

INSECT PEST CONTROL WITH BORON: The U.S. Government plans to reduce pesticide use 50% in its facilities from 1993 levels by the year 2000. With 20 golf courses in the Air Force to worry about I have increased my interest in approaches to pest control that do not necessitate the use of man made pesticides. It was recommended to me by one of the Air Force's entomologist that I check out the possibility of using a orthoboric acid containing bait for mole cricket control. Now I've used and recommended boric acid for control of roaches and ants in the home but plants are awful sensitive to excess boron. It is considered to be the first minor element out in the arid West that is going to accumulate in irrigated farm land to the point of making the soil unusable for crops. Turf research by Drs. Deal and Engel showed that "Boron applied at 7.5 pounds per acre was toxic to highly fertilized turf." The turf in that research was Merion Kentucky bluegrass.

The bait in question is 5% orthoboric acid and the label calls for applications of 90 pounds per acre. This amounts to 4.5 lb. of orthoboric/A or 3/4 lb. of boron. In other words one tenth of the amount that was toxic to Kentucky bluegrass. But, boron is an element. Where most pesticides degrade or decompose with time, elements don't. So with 10 applications you have raised the soil to toxic levels?

Probably not, because mole crickets are usually a problem on sandy acid soils and boron is rapidly leached from these semitropical soils. But, we do need to use care when using these alternative "safe" methods of pest control. If you were to take this same treatment to the Western U.S. for ant control you might well quickly create a soil sterility problem.

The cost of this product is suppose to run between \$144 to \$180/A. The bait is suppose to last six or more weeks under one and 1/2 inch of irrigation or rainfall. Therefore it is best used in the unirrigated roughs where it will probably help to control fire ants also. It has a reputation of

being better at controlling the younger mole crickets than the adults. This product is sold under the Nisus and Lesco labels in the Southeast.

Cutless, Prograss and Iron for Bermudagrass Encroachment Control: This was first reported in Golf Course Management, March 1994 issue, pg. 90. In the scientific literature it just got published in the second volume of the Journal of Turfgrass Management. Results at one of the Greater Dallas area clubs this year shows that it does work but a July application at the 1/4 rate was damaging, particularly in dry areas. This site and time was not ideal for any application to creeping bentgrass. The weather was very hot, very humid and the golf course sits in a wooded flood plain site.

PRESTANCIA: This is a development in Sarasota, Florida with a TPC club in it with the same name. I wasn't there long enough to play the course but did enjoy a walk in the development. Along with hearing an alligator bark I saw my first Bald Eagle and my first four Sandhill Cranes. These five birds were few among many different species of birds at the various ponds in this development. I also enjoy Tampa, Florida's MacDill Air Force's South Course for the large array of birds to be found there on any given day. Hard to believe both these courses are hard at work killing mole crickets yet are able to also be host to such great bird populations.

DENSITY: I have preached in class often enough about the height of cut being a useful tool to discourage weed invasions. The "organic gardeners" and anti-pesticide coalitions have also claimed that the proper height of cut is the answer to many turf problems. Well this summer I saw two nice demonstrations of **density** differences at the **same** height of cut determining the amount of weeds. As you might expect the less dense the turf the more weeds. Thus walking a golf course that was 60% Tifway bermudagrass and 40% common you would not be surprised to find a lot more crabgrass and goosegrass in the common. I had observed this before; but was amazed that almost all of these two weedy grasses were in the common on this Georgia course. For the northern readers I'm sure you may have seen a similar situation where patches of creeping bentgrass in Kentucky bluegrass fairways (in the old days); where the bentgrass was free of crabgrass while the bluegrass was loaded. I remember seeing this at least once in Kansas.

Later this summer I was out on some perennial ryegrass and common bermudagrass tees in West Texas; they had lots of common crabgrass and a fair amount of goosegrass. The perennial ryegrass was dominant in patches in the front of the tees and the common bermudagrass was dominant at the back of the tees. This I assumed was due to winter traffic. One of the above two summer annual grasses was almost totally found in the common bermudagrass; while the other was found primarily in the perennial ryegrass. Before reading on guess which was in where?

Goosegrass was in the perennial ryegrass and common crabgrass was in the bermudagrass.

Now why?

The answer I arrived at was that the common crabgrass germinated early when the common bermudagrass was thin and heat had not yet thinned the perennial ryegrass. Then the goosegrass germinated in the ryegrass as it was thinned by heat stress. Goosegrass germinates about a month later than crabgrass when the soil is about 5°C warmer. So now we have a reason why the best cultivar for that height of cut and region of the country is preferred not only by the anti-pesticide crowd but by the working turf manager. Whether it be crabgrass or annual bluegrass the turf species and cultivar that will provide you with the densest turf will provide you with the least need to fight weeds with pesticides. However, in and around the transition zone what is best at one time of year is not the best at another.

END