

# TurfComms



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

**'EL TORO' ZOYSIA:** This is a *Z. japonica* selection released by University of California, Riverside in 1986. It is medium-coarse like Meyer; but is much faster establishing. It produces a more open turf than Meyer and is not as winter hardy but can be expected to survive in the transition zone. It often test similar to the new Texas cultivars in quality. It has a better shade and drought tolerance than Meyer. It has poor color retention in the Fall when it develops a reddish cast. It has good salt tolerance. It shows susceptibility to Tawny Mole Cricket but shows moderate resistance or better to other pests and diseases. Like the other cultivars it is only vegetatively propagated. The availability of this cultivar has slowly spread across the South.

**TX A & M ZOYSIAS - MORE ON:** Jim Latham, formerly a USGA Green Section's Regional Director in the upper midwest, now retired in the Hillsboro area of Texas, wrote to me recently of his experience with Palisades, Crowne and **Cavalier**. "The latter ain't for home types." he writes. "It's just too tough and definitely requires a sharp mower. It's a water hog, if you worry about wilt.....It also shows directional growth, if that might be undesirable." Jim found the rotary lawn mower that cut Kentucky bluegrass nicely in Milwaukee wasn't up to cutting zoysia.

He writes, "My favorite is **Palisades**. It has an excellent color and it's upright growth is quite dense. During our grub and armadillo season this past summer, there was, for all practical purposes, no damage by the diggers. The drawback is brown patch, which hits in the spring and fall. Right now (Nov. 27th) the ugliness is most pronounced over a considerable portion of the

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area - maybe 30+%."....."The Palisades needs mowing every 3-4 days to minimize clipping mess on the surface. At 3 days I see cut leaves about a half-inch long. No such growth on Crowne or Cavalier, but the density of the Cavalier chokes down the mower if it gets too high."

"The Crowne is much less vigorous, given the same amount of fertilizer as Palisades. It doesn't have the density, either. Maybe if I had really pushed it would have done better, but that's another story. Brown patch was worse last year than this, the reverse of the Palisade story." Latter on he writes that even where left unmowed "around an informal, native plant bed" Crowne "is not very invasive."

If you are growing a zoysia read Golf Course Management, Dec. pg. 53. I came away with one or two useful pieces of information from this well written article. One of those was don't use Dimension on any zoysia to be on the safe side.

**OTHER NEWSLETTERS:** The Avant Gardener vs. GreenPrints I decided recently to try GreenPrints with the dollars I had previously used for a subscription to The Avant Gardener. After my first copy of Green Prints I'm very sorry I did that. GreenPrints is a Readers Digest with short stories "of the joy, humor, frustrations and the heart of gardening". I decided to try something different because The Avant Gardener is so Northeast oriented. But, it did have a fair amount of useful information. GreenPrints on the other hand has nice stories, but no information. For stories send \$18 to GreenPrints, P.O. Box 1355, Fairview, NC 28730. For information send \$20 to The Avant Gardener, P.O. Box 489, NY, NY 10028.

**NUTSEDGES:** At the American Soc. for Hort. Sci. Conf. in Salt Lake this summer I picked up a URL (<http://cnas.ucr.edu/%7ebps/hnutsedge.htm>) for material on nutsedges that I thought might be of interest. It was the 12 page proceedings of a March workshop on this weedy family. The Workshop covered History, Economic Importance and Distribution world wide, Biology, and control in Turf, Ornamentals, Trees and Vines, Vegetables, Field Crops and tips on Cultural Control of nutsedges by a vegetable crop specialist.

Did you know: yellow nutsedge was/is grown as a food crop (chufa, earth almond or rush nut)? That there are 109 other genera in this family and 3600 species? That world wide purple nutsedge "is rated as the world's worst weed."

Control? Nothing new for turf use, but spray early; it is difficult to kill tubers and new ones start to form about the time the fifth leaf emerges. Two new material for use in tree and vine crops will soon be available. Nutsedge is a problem in grape culture. One individual considers DeWitt Pro5 with UV protective coating to be the best for this use.

**OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE:** On November 17 & 18th I attended this nearby event. I was surprised to learn how many college fields had put in **SportGrass™** over the last couple of years. SportGrass is the thin density, long leaf artificial turf you lay down over sand and grow your turf in it. It wasn't that long ago (July '96) I was visiting the first field put in at the Univ. of Utah. Now Georgia Tech., Univ. of OK, Univ. of Ark., Univ. of MO, Univ. of VA, Univ. of Texas and a practice field for the Denver Broncos has been done. Kyle Field at TX A & M is being done also. Cost is 8 to 9 dollars/sq. ft. to redo an athletic field in this manner.

Long range maintenance of these fields is going to be a little tricky. One must keep the crown of the plant down in the one and 1/2 inches of fiber. You can only core aerify to 1 and 1/2 inches, but can solid tine with small diameter tines to 3 inches. Must keep thatch under control. This approach to managing turf under heavy traffic has possibilities for cart paths and practice tees.

**New Products** presented by various company tech. reps. were: **Prostar** - new label for fairy ring control, preventative and curative. **Mach 2** - a grub insecticide that does not have to be watered in and has a half life of 200 days. This is a hormone type that affects molting. **Pendimethalin** - now available as a granular material. **Conserve SC** - a new insecticide for surface feeding insects. It controls all the moth larva such as cutworms and sod webworms quite fast for a biological material. **Team Pro** - now with more trifluralin and thus more preemerge broadleaf weed control. ( more trifluralin on your turf scares me). **Kancel Plus** - this is a Ronstar and pendimethalin combination being put out by O.M. Scotts. The Toro people were pushing their new skid loader. They took over the **Dingo** by Sitework™ Systems, Inc. **Heritage™** the newest fungicide added to our arsenal. This is a new chemical family derived from a mushroom type fungus. Don't get too dependent on this material. They are expecting resistance to develop rapidly where it is used in excess.

Then there was a guy from **Western Sprinkler** trying to sell us on **polyethylene pipe** systems rather than PVC. I sure wish one of my clients had such a system. This course would have one free man with they didn't have to spend all their time digging up lines that were poorly glued ten years ago when they were first installed. **Polyethylene pipe** comes in 500 to 1000 foot lengths and takes water hammer and freezing a heck of a lot better than PVC. For an extra 20% the cost would pay for itself many times over on most golf courses. This company has the experience of putting in at least four polyethylene pipe systems in the last few years.

**Fire ants and Japanese beetles:** We heard reports about how Oklahoma is being invaded by these two pests. The fire ants have made good inroads into about seven southeastern counties and the Japanese beetles have been picked up in a few traps in the Tulsa and Ok. City areas.

Oklahoma will soon have out a survey of golf course maintenance and construction costs within the State, 1996 figures. I'll report on this when I get a copy of the survey.

Dr. Dennis Martin reported that none of the low maintenance Kentucky bluegrass cultivars were able to equal the turf quality of the better tall fescues in his trials. He also noted that **TifEagle** bermudagrass had fair winterhardiness at Stillwater, OK, and dark green color. He noted that it was a very slow grower and not very desiccation resistant. He also noted that the new **Tifton 94** bermudagrass was very winter hardy at Stillwater and had great potential for tee and fairway turf. **Midlawn** had good winter hardiness and SDS resistance at fairway height; while **Baby** appeared to have only adequate winter hardiness.

Brian Maloy, the new USGA agronomist in the region, noted that **vibratory plows** were much better for **tree root pruning** than using trenching machines. A lot less cleanup. Also use of bungee cord rather than rope results in a tight neat looking rope for cart and people barriers.

Dr. Ned Tisserat, turf pathologist from KS State Univ., admitted he hadn't made much progress toward **Spring Dead Spot** (SDS) control. Although he has learned a lot about the disease. Recently he examined one particular fairway and isolated all three of the fungi from different infected spots that have been noted by various pathologist as causing the disease. He has also concluded that August applications of fungicide may be a better choice than September applications, which appear to be generally better than October applications.

Tissert also felt that superintendents on at least Kansas golf courses may be using way too many fungicide applications on bentgrass greens. He does not feel that **pythium, anthracnose or take-all patch** are really problems in Kansas. He has yet to see Take-all Patch in Kansas. Pythium control can often be reserved for bentgrass collars and a few problem greens, he says.

Brian Peterson, supt. of Gaillardia Golf Dev., has had **A-4 bentgrass** greens since Oct. of 1994. He felt this was a very labor intensive cultivar. He is alternating Mondays all summer long with vertical mowing and topdressing. He finds that the grass bruises easily.

Dr. Dennis Martin gives Lofts L-93 very high marks when it comes to the new **bentgrass cultivars**. The four Penn. State cultivars A-1, A-4, G-2 and G-6 are also right up to the top of his high quality list.

**OK Sod Growers:** In Oklahoma **U-3 bermudagrass** from a sod grower's perspective is "*any bermudagrass that cuts and rolls nicely, has good density, and winter hardiness for the Oklahoma area.*", I was told by one grower. They have a survey out on Oklahoma Sod Production as of April 1997 using '95 and '96 data. Much (18%) of Oklahoma sod is grown along the southern edge of the State and shipped into the Greater Dallas/Ft. Worth area.

Sixty-five percent of the sod variety grown is U-3 common bermudagrass. Please note the above definition. This 'variety' is not the original U-3. But for some reason in OK the name U-3 tagged on to common makes it sell better I guess. Eighty-one percent of the sod grown in this southern but transition zone state is bermudagrass. Only one percent is buffalograss in a state where this is the native adapted species. 8% is zoysia, and 10% is tall fescue.

**JANE IS ILL:** If, I've seemed a little out of sorts since early November it is because my wife of the last 36 years has the Big C. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, been operated on, and gone through chemo twice now. She is doing fine and appears to be well on the road to recovery. She is enjoying being at home using a few of the 96 sick days she had accumulated in the last 16 years of teaching.

- Happy Holidays -