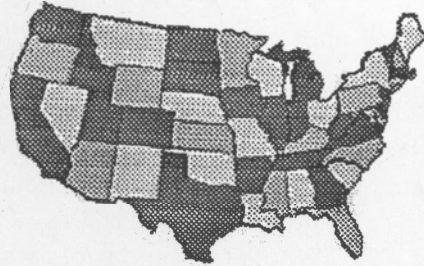


TurfComms

V. 14, I.6



April 25, 2003

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

RECOMMENDED MAGAZINES FOR GOLF COURSE

SUPERINTENDENTS: As old time readers know, my first two choices are GCSAA's Golf Course Management and USGA's Green Section Record. My third choice used to be Grounds Maintenance but seeing that they dropped me from the free subscription list, I no longer know how its quality is holding up. Therefore, for third place I strongly recommend Golfdom and I do so after just having read the Jan. 2003 issue. This is a magazine superintendents need to read to obtain a second opinion on their organization and their profession. It does a good job at both tasks.

MORNING SUN vs. AFTERNOON SUN: My observations, in the Dallas area, strongly suggest that in the southern portion of the cool-season-grass growing area summer afternoon shade after morning sun is very beneficial to cool season grass plants. In this case that is mostly creeping bentgrass. While at the Texas Turfgrass Conference one speaker, I think it was Dr. Chalmers, flashed a picture from the research of Mary E. Reid on the screen and it, among other things, compared afternoon shade vs. morning shade. I took note of that and obtained the original paper when I got home (Thank you Pete).

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Douglas T. Hawes, Ph.D.
Assistant Editor, Cynthia Maddox
e-mail: dhawes@dallas.net
web site <http://www.geocities.com/turfcomms/index.html>

3517 Deep Valley Trail
Plano, Texas 75023
(972) 867-0176

The paper is "Effects of Shade on the Growth of Velvet Bent and Metropolitan Creeping Bent" by Mary E. Reid, published in the **Bulletin of the United States Golf Association Green Section**, Oct. 1933, V.13 (5) pg. 131-135. I assume the work was done in the Greater Washington, D.C. area; it does not say in the paper.

The author notes in the first paragraph that: **"There is a possibility, also, that shading in the forenoon may cause different effects from shading in the afternoon."** She compared these and three other shade conditions. There are no statistical analysis. The experiments were apparently run from 21st of August till October 20th. Clippings were taken and weighed Sept. 10, 26th and Oct. 12th. Whole tops and roots were weighed at the end.

On the velvet bentgrass sun-in-the-morning-only produced the largest amount of clippings both for fresh weight and dry weight. Sun-in-the-afternoon-only produced the next to last amounts for the five treatments. All day shade produced the least.

The effect of shade on the roots was a little different. All day sun produced the most roots, with morning sun second and afternoon sun third. There were more than twice as many roots on the full-sun plants as the latter two treatments. The latter two treatments were each more than twice the weight of the speckled-sun trt. and all-day-shade root production.

The weight of the remaining tops on October 30th were very similar for all four treatments that received at least some sunlight for the day. In this case speckled-sun was slightly better than forenoon-sun treated plants which were slightly better than full-sun and afternoon-sun. In conclusion, I think the data supports my hypothesis that morning sun, especially in hot weather, is better than afternoon sun on cool season grasses. The reverse is true for warm season grasses in cool weather of spring and fall. Or, in other words, warm season grasses are healthier in cool weather if they receive sun in the afternoon. Which both tie into the temperatures which favor their peculiar metabolism during the photosynthetic process.

J. D. McMASTER (the Composted Rice Hull Guy): No, this is not an obit. just something I've been meaning to write for quite some time. Many years back, as J.D. was approaching retirement, I wrote something that was relatively positive concerning composted rice hulls. We communicated and he put me on retainer. I think at the time he was looking for someone to take over his business for him. I was not the guy but did enjoy working with him for a few years.

J.D did not begin his business out of any concern for the environment but after 25 years

of providing the turf industry with a recycled and composted substitute for peat moss, Mr. McMaster can say he did his part. What began as a combination desire to get out of big business and a vision that an old sand and gravel pit filled with rice hulls had to be worth something, J.D. began his career as an entrepreneur. He didn't make a millionaire out of himself but he retired at a more comfortable level than many of us will.

He ground those rice hulls up and sold them primarily as a substitute for peat moss in sand mixes for putting greens, tees and race tracks. The rice hulls didn't have the C.E.C. or moisture holding capacity of peat but, they also didn't breakdown very fast. They also were most competitive when used in a sand that did not have a great percolation rate. Composted rice hulls slowed the percolation rate of a sand down very little. Also, to their disadvantage when being tested for organic content, they were very high in silica a fact that caused problems when compared with peat on an ash test.

SEEDS OF CONCERN: the genetic manipulation of plants by David R. Murray, Ph.D. As mentioned in the last issue this was recommended and sent to me by David Nickson, an Australian reader. It is a little more difficult to read than the Flavor Saver book reviewed in V. 14, I.2. And where that book concentrated on the development of genetic engineering in one crop with the primary goal of shelf life, this book covers GE in all plants. According to the back cover of the book, "Dr. David R. Murray is an Australian scientist with a lifelong interest in plants", a botanist, and editor of three books in plant biology, and sole author of one on organic gardening.

The back cover also calls the book, "a balanced source of information. In a polarized debate, author David Murray takes an empirical approach and suggests that every genetically modified plant should be judged on its merits." [Ed. Most of those currently released he does not give very high marks.] Although the book does have an Australian slant it appears to be well written and mostly of a universal nature.

The author makes a good case against inserting herbicide resistance into plants. He also comes out against rice with B-carotene. Not because it may or may not be beneficial but on the basis that a more balanced diet is the way the people should go not through the approach that one crop should meet all their nutritional needs. That is too much like being in a prison and getting your one bowl of gruel each day.

Dr. Murray has done a good job at looking at the big picture of plant GE. Seeds of Concern is a book well worth reading if you are interested in the subject.

DIRR'S TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WARM CLIMATES: Over the years I've heard nothing but praise for Dirr's books. But with a half dozen books on trees already I did not feel the need to duplicate what I already had. Then along came the above text and

I thought this should fill a void in my library. It does that, but not as well as I would have liked. I purchased it this winter and read through it underneath an Orchid Tree, *Bauhinia variegata*, in my winter "home".

But, I couldn't find the Mexican olive tree which is a very commonly used small ornamental tree down here in South Texas (Harlingen). It did however help me identify a vine I had encountered several times last fall in Plano, TX and had not been able to identify. That is Carolina Moonseed, *Cocculus carolinus*.

I felt this was a text written by a tree lover who is no longer worried about tenure and thus just trying to convey a text of the southern trees, shrubs and vines he had grown to love. Dirr works and lives in Georgia and I strongly recommend the book for those in the Southeast. The text has excellent pictures and good descriptions of the plants given.

VENTING: I see there maybe a new word to use when discussing aerification. In the March, 2003 issue of GCM Terry Ostmeyer uses the word VENTING to describe, "aerification with small solid tines or blades, shallow verticutting , and water injection cultivation.

Bob Schuyler: I attended a slide presentation on local nature, mostly birds and flowers put on by one of the RV park's residents. His name was George Schuyler, a retired dentist from Billings, MT, and while he was talking I was having this strong feeling he was somehow related to a someone I had meet in the golf course maintenance profession. I went up to him after the talk and told him whom I was and my background as a USGA agronomist and my feelings expressed above.

He than told me I might have run into his son Bob; and I immediately knew he was correct when he said that he had died about 11 years ago (1992). For a short time there, I was wishing I had not said anything. Bob was superintendent at Minot C.C. when I met him, at least one of the times our paths crossed. He was, for me, one of the most impressive superintendents I met in the Northern Tier states, for he had cut the nitrogen off to the greens and had less *Poa annua* on his course than any but the newest of golf courses in that region. He was an excellent golfer and groomed his course for good golfing conditions even if money was in short supply. Bob's last stop as a superintendent/golf director was at the Missoula, MT Golf Course.

So, for those of you in the Northern Tier states, memory of Bob lives on.

END