

BETTER LAWN

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Harvests

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CHICAGO A.S.T.A. MEETINGS HIGHLIGHTS

President Gassner, Ed Spears and Ed Mangelsdorf of the Board met in a special session with key Associate members at the Chicago A.S.T.A. meetings. All plus Carl Farris met with the Lawn and Turfgrass Division Research & Development Committee and to review and advise upon the climax method of testing natural Kentucky bluegrass. Further, Al Mangelsdorf, Roy Edwards, Jr. and Ross Eldridge (Chairman) met with the over-all A.S.T.A. Legislative Committee on this threat to regulation of the seed industry from without.

Here were the actions taken, of interest to Institute members.

The Board of Directors of the A.S.T.A. vigorously re-affirmed their opposition to the climax method of testing Kentucky bluegrass, and its imposition upon the industry without regard to industry wishes. The meeting determined that this is a matter of principle concerning the whole trade, worthy of the necessary financial support to carry the matter to the courts if necessary.

The Research & Development committee (of which Dr. Schery is a member), under the chairmanship of Bill Jeffers (Oliger Seed) met to discuss the matter, mostly from the technical viewpoint. It was concluded by this committee that an insufficiently broad investigation had been made before the Association of Official Seed Analysts vote to use this method, the basis upon which it was evolved being subject to criticism especially because of the assumption that a single blended sample was taken to adequately represent bluegrass nationally, and that there was considerable question whether the proper climax blowing point was chosen (even upon the basis of the analysts own research). Furthermore, it was pointed out that each lot of bluegrass seed has its own personality, so that any presumed "averages" are shot through with exceptions in special cases; it is questioned that a machine can adequately substitute for human judgment in the handling of such exceptions, indicating that the climax method rigidly followed would be intellectually dishonest. The Research & Development committee passed unanimously a resolution that more research is needed, and requested of the Executive Committee of the A.S.T.A. the immediate granting of \$750 with which to pursue and accumulate data.

The final session, the Legislative Committee, received the Lawn and Turfgrass Division Research Committee report, plus added clarification by Al Mangelsdorf and Dr. Schery. It voted unanimously to recommend to the Executive Committee

the resolution of the Lawn and Turfgrass Division, and to add its wholehearted support in opposition to the climax method.

At the latter session, Stan Rollins, of the U.S.D.A., informed the committee that federal people operating under the Federal Seed Act had not made up their mind as yet concerning the desirability of introduction of the climax method, and were open-minded and ready to consider any industry arguments. In any event, should the system be recommended for adoption, hearings to present arguments pro and con would be held in approximately a year from now. This, of course, behooves the Institute to continue to perfect its data, and develop adequate case histories concerning climax inequalities.

THE INSTITUTE'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION INCREASING

A January 12 letter from Christoph Esisele of L. C. Nungesser of Darmstadt, Germany, hoped that Dr. Schery would have an article prepared for them for publication in March. This was written as quickly as possible. The Institute has also received some test bluegrass seed from the Centraal Bureau in Rotterdam.

Also relating to the Institute's international relations, Dr. Schery received a letter from Rene Paquet, Ministere de La Voirie, Department of Roads, Quebec, asking for Institute publications on lawns and landscaping.

MAILINGS MADE TO INSTITUTE ADVISORS

Recent mailings to the Lawn Institute's advisors have included copies of "Features and Futures of Lawn Seed" as presented by Dr. Schery before the Seed Control officials; "Bluegrass Sprouting Under Stress", the text of Dr. Schery's appearance at the Agronomy meetings; epitomized minutes of the Board meeting in Kansas City and notice of President Gassner's appointment of a committee for further study of a quality seal.

WAYNE BEAVERS VISITS IOWA IN BEHALF OF INSTITUTE

Wayne Beavers, Account Executive for the Lawn Institute with Bozell & Jacobs, Inc., made a two day trip to Iowa in November and Tuesday evening, November 17, appeared at a bluegrass operators dinner meeting in Creston hosted by Kenneth Kiburz of Kiburz Seed Company.

On Thursday, November 19, Wayne called on the Meredith Publishing Company in Des Moines, and visited with Larry Grove, Editor, Garden Department, Better Homes and Gardens Magazine, and Guy Neff, Editor-in-Chief, Book Department.

That evening, Wayne spoke before another group of bluegrass operators in Creston, hosted by Don Jones of the Berry Seed Company.

The Institute film, "Bluegrass Beauty," was shown at each of the operators' meetings along with a special display board and a scrapbook documenting efforts and accomplishments of the Institute.

At the Meredith Publishing Company, continued cooperation of the Institute with their publications was pledged and results of this and separate contacts by Dr. Schery will be reported in future issues of "Harvests" as they occur.

INSTITUTE TO PROVIDE 1960 MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES

The Lawn Institute will provide all Associate Members with 1960 Membership Certificates suitable for framing and wall display upon receipt of their renewal dues.

At the suggestion of the membership committee, all Associate memberships will be billed by the calendar year.

118 NEWSPAPERS RECEIVE INSTITUTE SERIES

Dr. Schery's five article series, "Spring Lawn Care," has been distributed in mat and proof form to 118 selected newspapers.

Included in the mailings were two photos of Dr. Schery and a background information story on him.

INSTITUTE BOARD ACTION HIGHLIGHTS

Members of the Lawn Institute Board convened at the November Western Seedsmen Association meeting in Kansas City.

The Board approved a series of four cooperative releases to 100 TV stations through Encyclopedia Britannica, for the 1960 season.

A grant of \$500 was authorized to be offered to the Botany Department of Iowa State College, to continue the seed storage research initiated by Dr. Bass several years past, with the cooperation of the Institute.

Research data compiled for exposition to the Seed Control Officials on the climax method was discussed, with opposition to imposition of climax testing at this time re-emphasized by the Board. Because of shortness of time other Institute activities were not discussed, but were left to be reported upon in this issue of Harvests.

Since the proposed Institute "seal of quality" is primarily of influence on the Associate member group of the Institute, the Board meeting was opened for general discussion at 10:00 a.m. Fifty or more Associates or their representatives attended, and participated in the discussions moderated by Dr. Schery. The matter

was referred back to a committee of interested Associate members, for possible smaller-scale development. The committee appointed by President Gassner consists of Sam Backus of Ferry-Morse, Jack Herman of Northrup-King, Bill Teweles of Teweles Seed, and Swede Townsend of Whitney Seed.

DR. SCHERY REVIEWS SUNSET MAGAZINE'S TURFGRASS BOOK

Sunset, the well-known West Coast magazine, asked Dr. Schery to criticize the turfgrass portion of their new Turfgrass Book and later asked him to review the manuscript for the entire book.

INSTITUTE INFORMATION TO CALIFORNIA PARK COMMISSION

The Park and Recreation Commission of Albany, California, has requested information from the Lawn Institute.

LAWN FERTILIZING TOPIC IN POPULAR GARDENING

Popular Gardening for January carried the Dr. Schery feature entitled, "A New Slant In Lawn Fertilizing."

Tests of adding fertilizer on frozen lawns in the middle of winter were the basis of the article.

Kentucky bluegrass and fine lawn fescues were named as hardy lawn grasses.

INTERNATIONAL MINERALS PLANNING TURFGRASS BOOKLET

The Research Director of International Minerals in Skokie, Illinois, has approached Dr. Schery about composing a turfgrass section on a booklet being designed for intensive release in the Chicago and New England areas. Plans call for an initial publication of over a million copies.

MONSANTO CHEMICAL INITIATES TURFGRASS RESEARCH PROGRAM

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, is undertaking some turfgrass research for the Monsanto Chemical Company.

Dr. Schery is expected to help shape the test program and since this is a critical climatic area for bluegrass and fescue, very worthwhile information could be gained for extending southward the zone where bluegrass and fescue are especially suitable.

McCULLOUGH SEED DISPLAYS INSTITUTE MATERIALS

The Charles McCullough Seed Company display at the Outdoor Living Show was viewed by 500 to 800 dealers in the Cincinnati area on Saturday, January 16 and

Sunday, January 17.

The Institute furnished sample seed packets, a variety of reprints and enlarged photographs illustrating natural Kentucky bluegrass and Oregon grown fescue for the booth.

NEW JERSEY GRANGE DISTRIBUTES QUALITY TURFGRASS BROCHURE

The Mills Division, Cooperative Grange League Federation Exchange asked for 1,000 copies of the Institute's "Quality Turfgrass" brochure for placement in retail locations.

DR. SCHERY ADDRESSES WESTPORT WOMEN'S CLUB

On January 11, Dr. Schery appeared at Linda Hall Library in Kansas City before the Westport Women's Club with an illustrated talk on lawn management principles and procedures.

AGRONOMISTS TOLD BLUEGRASS IS SLOW BUT SURE

Bluegrass sprouting behavior research was reported by Dr. Schery to the American Society of Agronomy at its annual convention in Cincinnati, November 17.

Pointing out when a good bluegrass seed mixture is planted in the lawn it often "makes green" slowly, Dr. Schery concluded, "No matter what the source of the seed, if it is of good quality, adequate germination will sooner or later result."

Here are a few notes from the Turfgrass Division sessions of the Agronomy meetings in Cincinnati, of interest to Institute members:

Two new crabgrass control chemicals seem headed for marketing and probable success. These are Zytron (Dow Chemical), a thio-phosphorus organic; and Dacthal (Diamond Alkali), a chloro-phthalate. Zytron will be test marketed in 1960, and Dacthal apparently has another year of experimentation ahead of it before marketing. Both products have given very effective control of crabgrass in areas where tested this year, seeming to be more effective than chlordane, and having economy advantages over arsenicals. Pre-emergence use is stressed for both, although there is some post-emergence selectivity and seed-inhibiting effects. Heavier rates of Dacthal are reported detrimental to red fescues, causing thinning (but not burn).

Juska reporting for the U.S.D.A., Beltsville group, reports that in tests there on the presently used pre-emergence crabgrass chemicals, that the arsenicals at the recommended rates (calcium arsenate 12 lbs/M, lead arsenate 20 lbs/M) reduced germination of new seedings very little. On the other hand both chlordane and PAX inhibited new seedings for a period of three to four months.

Zytron and Dacthal permanence in the soil is apt to be much the same, so that the

safest generalization for pre-emergence crabgrass chemicals is to not use them where new seeding is contemplated within the next few months. New seedings mature enough to be regularly mowed will likely not be injured, so that autumn planted lawns can be treated pre-emergence in late spring just ahead of the crabgrass season.

SCHOLASTIC COACH PUBLISHES DR. SCHERY ARTICLE

"The Best Turf For Athletic Fields", by Dr. Schery, appears in the January issue of Scholastic Coach.

The article is devoted to athletic field turfgrass and makes grass recommendations by sections of country with Kentucky bluegrass and Oregon quality fescues specifically suggested for the North. The article is illustrated with a two-color map showing the five major turf zones.

"BLUEGRASS BEAUTY" TO BE SEEN ON 107 TV STATIONS

Modern Talking Picture Service, Inc., distributors for the Lawn Institute film, "Bluegrass Beauty", report bookings for 1959 included 86 TV stations and 212 non-theatrical showings.

They further advise that "Bluegrass Beauty" has been booked in advance for 21 additional TV stations and 64 non-theatrical showings.

IOWA EXTENSION SERVICE REQUESTS INSTITUTE MATERIALS

Upon learning of the Institute's cooperation in providing lawn information to the Massachusetts extension people, Dr. Eliot Roberts, Extension Specialist in Horticulture, Iowa State College, Ames, has asked to receive future Institute press kits and other materials for distribution to the 16 Iowa County agents who serve chiefly urban areas.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ... ABOUT THE INSTITUTE AND QUALITY LAWN GRASSES . . .

"This is a reply to your letter concerning the use of the climax method.

"In the privacy of our own commercial laboratory we have had very decided views concerning the value of the climax method and the suggestion that it be made official. We have not yet aired these views.

"In our laboratory we test a considerable amount of bluegrass both from Kentucky and from the western regions. We are familiar with the peculiarities of seed from both regions and we are firmly of the belief that the climax method does not do justice to the Kentucky seed. We find that in the climax method almost all Kentucky seed loses a considerable amount of light seed. We suppose this would be unimportant if the seed were not viable. But in our experience we find that this seed is viable.

"For ease of testing we would be all for the climax method, but we simply do not believe it would be fair to all segments of the bluegrass trade. We base our views on a very considerable experience."

C. H. Waldron
Commercial Seed Laboratory

"I have recently had the opportunity of reading several of your papers and I enjoyed the experience very much. While I realize that your mailing list may be restricted to members of the Lawn Institute, I would greatly appreciate receiving copies of any of your publications which you may possibly be able to send to me."

J. H. Boyce
Plant Research Institute
Canada Department of Agriculture

"Thanks again to the Better Lawn and Turf Institute for able assistance. We shall be looking forward to the spring kit from the Institute.

" . . . We are grateful to the Better Lawn & Turf Institute, and thanks for all your help. Best wishes for the New Year -- "

Larry C. Grove
Associate Editor
Garden Department
Better Homes & Gardens

"A return to Kentucky blue and fescue might seem the right answer to the fairway turf grass problem. The use of Merion Kentucky bluegrass has been proposed.

"Originally, fairway turf was mostly Kentucky blue and fescue. Then came fairway watering. Close cutting and lots of water doomed both of them. . . .

"In the more temperate parts of the North, bluegrasses alone, or in conjunction with fescue, continue to be the most likely grasses for fairway use, with bents still the most likely answer on watered courses.

"Use of Merion Kentucky bluegrass has been proposed because of its great immunity to leaf spot. Merion seems to thatch as badly as bent turf, so control of it will be necessary, if true . . . Up to now reseeding of Merion Kentucky into existing turf areas has been disappointing."

Dr. O. J. Noer
"Turf Round-Up"
Golfdom (October issue)

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN REQUESTS ASSISTANCE

The Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden has asked Dr. Schery to help organize a turfgrass research program at the Botanical Garden in St. Louis.

DR. SCHERY RECEIVES ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA AWARD

Encyclopedia Britannica has just presented Dr. Schery with a wall plaque which reads: "The Board of Editors of the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA is greatly honored to welcome you ROBERT WALTER SCHERY to the company of its distinguished contributors throughout the world".

BLUEGRASS AND FESCUE "WINTER GRASS" TESTS CONTINUE

Our Advisor, Dr. A. M. Davis, Associate Agronomist, the University of Arkansas, reports upon our "winter grass" plots there involving bluegrass and Oregon fescue: "The Bluegrass and Fescue plots were slightly browned in November when temperatures dropped to the low teens, by now they have recovered and only the Fescues still show some browning."

BERMUDA GRASS GROUP AFFILIATION UNDER CONSIDERATION

The Lawn Institute has been in contact with the Bermuda grass people in Arizona (where the domestic supply of Bermuda grass seed originates) with a view to their association with the Institute. They are also reviewing the Bermuda grass section of Dr. Schery's turf grass chapter in the forthcoming U.S.D.A. Yearbook.

INSTITUTE'S CLIMAX TESTING DATA PRESENTED TO SEED CONTROL OFFICIALS

Speaking before the Association of American Seed Control Officials in Minneapolis on November 17th, Dr. Schery gave the Lawn Institute's position in a presentation relating to research on the climax method of bluegrass seed testing.

Dr. Schery pointed out that the Institute's data indicates that the uniform blowing point was rather unfortunately chosen for the present climax method. This imposes an unfair burden on certain seed lots and regions. The Institute feels that if the climax method, as a method, is to be imposed, the uniform blowing point should reside about the middle of the hand method range, rather than top-side of it.

Analysts and officials were invited to contact the Institute' after examining the discussion sent them following the meeting. They were further invited to utilize their influence to see that the question is re-examined and sufficient research data compiled to make any uniform blowing method fair and respected for all concerned.

Seed control officials at the meeting expressed in general their hearty approval as their reaction to the proposed "seal of quality". In fact, Dr. Schery was told by several that if such a seal were established, they could reserve their control activities for those mixtures not bearing the seal.

** AN EDITORIAL **

IS IT ALWAYS "THE WEATHER"?

We have noticed in recent years, especially in golf course circles where the emphasis is on intensive care of bentgrasses, but also in areas where local pride has pushed lawn making much to the forefront (Denver, for example), that certain problems unexpectedly arise. As we peruse the golfing world's publications, each year we see protestations that the weather (or some other factor) was the worst ever. For example, in the November-December 1959 Golf Course Reporter, we see the question posed "what happened to our grass this year?". Then the explanation that "in the memory of the Old Timers such as ----, 1959 has been beyond all doubt, the toughest".

It is always convenient to attribute failure to drought, disease, ice, or some other natural calamity. But these all recur from time to time, and the fact that they seem nowadays credited with wreaking greater havoc than ever before, leads one to suppose that perhaps the weather is no more severe than it used to be, but that the turf is less rugged.

This may be partly due to employment of prima donna strains and races of grass, which have not withstood the tribulations of time, and do tend to suffer inordinately by unexpected changes in natural conditions which they have not had to face before. But we suspect that also, under the specialized conditions mentioned that lead to intensified turf growing, that golf course superintendents and the especially prideful home owners may be "forcing" their turf a little more than should be, at least at seasons that are difficult for it. The susceptibility to "disease" is thus increased, and complications from the build-up of too much debris (thatch or mat) leads to other unnatural conditions.

In addition to advocating at least a portion of the old time proven grasses in seed mixtures, we might also caution in product use against over-intensified and unnaturally stimulated turf, at least out of its normal season for such performance. We noticed at Rhode Island this year, for example, that the bluegrass-fescue plots rating best in autumn, were those that received the lighter rates of summer fertilization (although during summer, the more heavily treated plots carried superior ratings).

- By Dr. Robert W. Schery