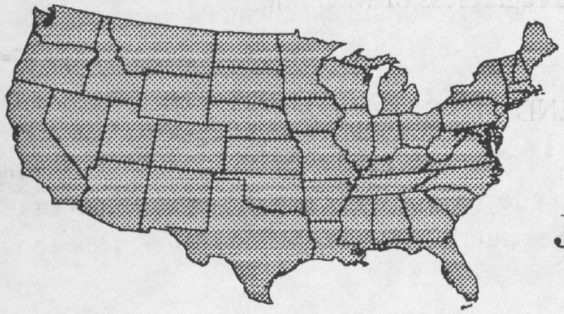
TurfComms



Vol. 9, I. 3 **Jan. 2, '96**

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

GCSAA CONF. & SHOW - I'd appreciate your voting for George E. Renault III, CGCS as vice-president of the GCSAA. It would be nice to see an outstanding former student make it one more step in GCSAA Board.

Look forward to seeing you at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando. If you are looking for me there leave a message at the **McMaster Composted Rice Hulls Booth, #4749.**

Oaks and Pines - My son-in-law, a wetlands expert, said my quote by Carl Whitcomb, Ph.D. in the last issue: "**Pines and oaks** demand well drained soils" was incorrect. The loblolly pine is very tolerant of standing water and many oaks in the red oak subgroup are wetland species. A check with Whitcomb's own text show also the Swamp White Oak in the white oak group.

TEXAS TURFGRASS CONFERENCE: Texas Turf Survey results was one of the first things on the program. I was surprised to learn that a very high percentage of Texas golf courses were still using municipal water supplies. Texas also is much like the rest of the U.S. in that poor quality soils are a big problem for turf managers, except for those in the lawn service industry where labor is the number one problem. This survey will be published in 1996. Next, Dr. Coleman Ward projected for the U.S. a 25 billion dollar turf industry in the 21st Century. With water availability and quality the number one problem. He noted that 14% of Florida golf courses are now using effluent. It is definitely true now that new courses going in already have this as a

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major problem. For those planning ahead Dr. Engelke mentioned that the Texas A & M Turfgrass Field Day would be in College Station on the 3rd Wednesday of Sept.

ZOYSIA - Dr. Engelke talked about zoysia noting that they are finding the "wider the blade the better the cold tolerance". They are finding excellent salt tolerance in the zoysias but Meyer's tolerance is poor. DAL-8502 and -8516 have excellent shade tolerance. They have found that high soil temperatures are needed to get better rooting and rhizomes in this genera.

Dr. Richard White, TX A&M's new turf researcher, reported his findings that frequency of mowing appears to have no affect on root development but height of cut has a large affect. TX A&M is now going to require internships for all turf majors. That should help catch them up with the better two year programs.

THE AUDUBON COOPERATIVE SANCTUARY PROGRAM was the subject of one half session. The resource inventory has been revised so as to be easier to fill out. I encourage any golf course to enter this program. I thing the good publicity possible is worth it in this day and age of bad press for golf courses.

BERMUDAGRASS GREENS was the subject of a talk by USGA agronomist from Florida, Mr. John Foy. He mentioned that Florida superintendents were using 10 to 12 pounds of charcoal per cubic yard of topdressing material to give improved color during the winter months. The little added heat helps to keep the frost off and speeds recovery, but there appears to be an additional greening, yet unexplained. Foy reports no deactivation of Rubigan treatments for Poa control have occurred to his knowledge. I had previously heard of a superintendent in the Brownsville, TX area using activated charcoal and iron sulfate for the same purpose.

He felt that 328 no longer could be counted on to produce a satisfactory putting surface in Florida. I called him after the conference to discuss this and some of the other questions I had. In response to a question about the new African bermudagrass strains that Dr.Taliaferro of OK had developed he said that during the second year even the best of them thin and are not acceptable.

He also noted they were spraying Primo on greens in Florida at reduced rates. Ed. A check of superintendents found this to be one to two pounds/acre. He said it was the most useful on greens with lots of off type bermudagrasses in them and to tighten up 328 greens. Note, there is no label rate for use on putting greens.

GROWTH REGULATORS were covered by Wallace Menn of TX A&M. He noted that Embark was good for reduction of centipede stolon spread. He also noted that the herbicides Roundup, Fusilade, Poast and Event all had growth regulating properties at low rates. But, he cautioned there was only a low safety margin with these materials.

He spent most of his time talking about the Type II growth regulators; those that reduce cell elongation and are both shoot and root absorbed. Examples are Cutless, TGR and Primo. He pointed out the following about this group. 1. They result in darker color and better density when used at the correct rate. 2. They are affected by soil type. 3. To be effective they must be irrigated in and there must be adequate soil moisture. 4. They work best under good growing conditions. 5. At putting green height the rate must be drastically reduced. You can get long term stunting. 6. May take several applications of gibberellic acid to reverse the stunting affect,

but this can be used if needed. 7. TGR will shut down St. Augustine for 2 and 1/2 growing months and the clippings from treated turf placed under trees can severely retard tree leaf growth. 8. If the rate is too high these materials may thin the turf. 9. At higher height on common bermudagrass you may get a browning. 10. Primo on St. Augustine really shortens internodes and leaf length. 11. Use in mixed grass species stands gives mixed results. (each species has its optimum rate). 12. This type regulator usually allows good stolon and rhizome growth so that recovery is good. 13. Weeds don't respond especially nutsedge. 14. Reduced mowing frequency is possible, clipping amounts are less and chance of scalping is therefore reduced. 15. Water rate use is less therefore moisture stress is less apt to occur or, you can irrigate less frequently.

Ed. I would say the type II growth regulators are here to stay with some price reduction I think there is a lot of uses for them.

STAN ZONTEK, USGA agronomist of 25 years from N.J., had a talk titled "Mayhem in the Mid-Atlantic". He noted that grey leaf spot was very common in perennial ryegrass this summer and into the Fall. It raised havoc during the hot summer. It has not normally been considered a problem disease. He is urging superintendents to avoid preemerges on greens if possible because of root damage. As noted above he urged not using DMI fungicides on bent/Poa greens during summer stress.

CONTRACT MAINTENANCE was Richard Luikens topic. He discussed the desirability of out sourcing (contracting out maintenance) tasks that don't fit in normal maintenance flow to contracting of all of maintenance. Ed. I think it makes good sense to contract out some items of maintenance. Which items are going to depend upon the golf course in question and the size of the job. Contracting out a full 18 holes of cart path installation makes sense; while one hole may not. Custom spraying of fairways and roughs might be desirable where competent contractors abound and the course seldom sprays these areas but, not where spraying is a monthly job or where contractors for such work are rare.

Luikens noted that companies that do contract maintenance at many golf courses save money by buying at bulk rates and lower cost for benefits such as health insurance. Ed. I would agree but, I see Corporations like Club Corp. eating up a lot of those profits as they age and acquire more white collar managers and specialist at corporation headquarters.

TRANSITION PROBLEMS as they pertain to overseeded bermudagrass greens in the South was covered by Dr. Coleman Ward. He gave four tips to follow during the overseeding period for healthy bermudagrass in the Spring worth repeating: 1. high soil potassium levels, 2. delay overseeding, 3. use preventative fungicide program, 4. do not allow turf to become dry in the Fall.

He felt there were two main factors that determined persistence of the overseeding grasses: genetics and mowing height. The genetics results in the following order of increasing persistence: annual ryegrass, Poa trivialis, fine fescue, perennial ryegrass and then creeping bentgrass. Latter in the program Mark Sellman, Jacklin Seed, mentioned a new bentgrass species they are working with for possible use in overseeding. *A. idahoensis*, Idaho bentgrass, has a good transition. Mowing height as lowered speeds up death (transition) of the cool season grasses.

Dr. Ward also addressed the old question as to whether seeding rate affected transition. He felt that reduced seeding rate was not necessarily less competitive in spring. Why? Because the fewer

plants are healthier due to less competition. Ed. Dr. Duble takes this same approach I believe but I see in A-G Turf Farms newsletter Turf Talk, Nov./Dec. '95 where Dr. Knoop takes the opposite approach and recommends seeding light to avoid Spring transition problems. I have not taken sides but do feel that early seeding and heavy stands of cool season grasses no matter how they are obtained can be very harmful.

Dr. Ward then gave common mistakes that he felt led to poor transitions: 1. core aerification too early, 2. letting greens get dry, 3. misapplication of herbicides, 4. over fertilization, 5. mowing at tournament height, 6. too low vertical mowing. He strongly feels that vertical mowing can be more detrimental to bermudagrass than the overseeding. He also feels too close mowing is a problem in conjunction with vertical mowing. He strongly urges that you not begin vertical mowing until the soil at four inches is between 62 and 65°F.

He then went on to offer some transition tips. 1. Verify that the bermudagrass is alive before you do anything. 2. Avoid removal of emerging bermudagrass leaves. 3. Increase nitrogen fertilizer to stimulate bermudagrass. Ed. Be sure this is not done till the soil temperature at four inches is above 62°F. Reduce frequency of watering and use Kerb if necessary. Diquat at four ounces per acre will give you a rapid transition. With Kerb the lower the height the lower the rate needed. He said an 1/8 lb./A is all that is needed at putting green height. Kerb needs to be put on about 20 to 25 days ahead of planned transition.

He then talked about **Poa annua control** in overseedings. He said that after years of Prograss use he found resistant Poa annua. He also has seen Poa resistant to Atrazine on sod farms. He is happy with Balan and expects 45 days of control with it.

DEER REPELLENT: Try light frequent applications of Milorganite. No, it doesn't work on moose.

MORE ON TEXAS TURFGRASS CONFERENCE IN NEXT ISSUE.

INCLUDING A PAGE ON THE **NEW BENTGRASS CULTIVARS**

AND **MOLE CRICKETS**

GRASS CLIPPINGS: Another reason not to use grass clippings for mulch can be read in a scientific article published in the Dec. **HortScience** by Bahe and Peacock. They harvested clippings from turf treated with a mixture of 2,4-D, dicamba and MCPP at 1, 5, 10 and 15 days after spraying the turf. Then used the clippings to mulch various plant species. Even waiting 15 days did not result in undamaged tomato plants. Less sensitive was salvia which appeared not to be affected regardless of when the clippings were harvested.

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