

TurfComms

V. 16, I. 1

Jan 28, 2005

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

THE PENNCROSS LAWN: Every once in a while I get a call from a homeowner wanting free advice. This last evening (Oct. 28th) it was a Greater Dallas resident who wanted to plant a Penncross lawn. At the end of 7 and ½ minutes, I was reasonably sure I had talked him out of it. After I got off the phone I remembered I had recommended such a lawn to a Greater New York City family. Their lawn already had a fair amount of creeping bentgrass in it and NYC has a much cooler climate than Dallas. That also was some forty years ago. I would be very reluctant to make that recommendation again, but maybe for a shady Michigan lawn?

BERMUDAGRASS GREENS and NITROGEN RATES: When I started with the USGA Green Section in 1978 I had little experience with bermudagrass and none with bermudagrass greens. I found it very hard to believe that one needed to apply such high rates of nitrogen to greens to produce high quality. Yet, time and time again the highest quality Bermuda greens were those which were receiving 12 pounds of nitrogen per (lb. N/M) square feet and up. Yet at the same time I had a client with some excellent bentgrass greens in Texas using less than 4 lb./M. I never did figure out why those Texas superintendents needed so much nitrogen to grow good greens. It appears Dr. White of Texas A& M has.

In the Nov./Dec. 2004 issue of the USGA Record, which of course you all get, is an article titled Environment and Culture Affect Bermudagrass Growth and Decline. And there in table 2 is proof that under some conditions 24 lb.N/M results in better quality than 12 lb. N/M. In fact under the conditions of his experiment only 12 and 24 lb.N/M combined with heavy topdressing provided minimal accepted quality putting green turf. I guess I can assume that most of those superintendents had the disease '*bermudagrass decline*' in their greens and although at that time there was no way of knowing this the superintendents had figured out a way to live with the disease. I always figured they were working too hard; but I guess growing high quality bermudagrass greens is just very hard work under some conditions. This research documents some of that.

TURFCOMMS is published at unpredictable intervals by the editor and publisher

Douglas T. Hawes, Ph.D.
Assistant editor: Cynthia Maddox
(972) 867-0176
website – <http://www.geocities.com/turfcomms/index.html>

3517 Deep Valley Trail
Plano, Texas 75023-7932
e-mail dhawes@dallas.net

One with Nineveh: Politics, Consumption, and the Human Future. By Paul Ehrlich and Anne Ehrlich copyright 2004 I read this book in the early Fall finishing Nov. 10th of 2004. The first six chapters are about the destruction of the environment by man as he makes it into his nesting place. The last five chapters are suggestions and proposals for changing human behavior and the way government works with the goal of preserving something of 'nature' while creating a sustainable world. The Nineveh in the title refers to the capital city of the Assyrian Empire on the Tigris River. According to at least one archaeologist this city like many others in past history got too big and could no longer sustain itself. Or as the author Jared Diamond puts it, "the region committed "ecological suicide." The Ehrlich book is their attempt to warn the world of the upcoming manmade ecological suicide of its home. But, I fear only those few that think they have it at least partially right will listen. They cried wolf once before with concern for over population and the world will not listen to them again. **Too bad!**

Seven pages of this book used Australia as an example of "population politics" so I photocopied these and sent them off to a colleague in Australia who I have come to have high regard for. He seemed to agree with the Ehrlichs and wrote back: "Australia is one of the most fragile continents on earth and in a very short time we have done an excellent job in trying to obliterate it.....The economist view that economic growth is all that matters and will fix everything is unadulterated ignorance dominated by greed. Populate or perish used to be a catchery but when you look at the real cause of many of these dramatic problems, the overall reasons come back to a population that can't be sustained at the present standard of living.....There are many initiatives in place to partially address these circumstances but in terms of fundamental sustainability the light at the end of the tunnel is a runaway train coming towards us and the same probably applies to the rest of the planet."

MERCURY: How can "a U.S. mining company admit that it released.....17 tons of mercury into the air over five years and 16 tons into the water" and still deny that anyone's health was affected? Well according to USA Today, Dec. 23, 2004, Newmont Mining said just that.

Because I have had a lot of experiences with mercury over the years; combined with EPA's not allowing golf courses to use it for a fungicide for snow mold control has caused me to have a great interest in this element. The Jan/Feb 2005 issue of **Mother Jones** has an interesting article (pg. 60- 67) on where this mercury plays an important role in the food of a group of people. The Inuit people of the Artic, because they have a diet high in hunted animals, ingest lots of pollutants. Mercury is just one of them. "*Mercury concentrations in Qaanaaq mothers are the highest ever recorded, 12 times greater than the level that poses neurological risks to fetuses, according to U.S. government standards.*" For more on mercury as a pollutant you might go to <mercuryaction.org>

A SMALL TREE FOR THE SOUTHWEST: Do you need a small flowering tree that does not produce any fruit or pods? That has narrow six inch willow-like leaves and prefers dry situations? Hardy to -10°F, the Chitalpa is such a tree. It is a sterile cross between the Desert Willow and the Southern Catalpa. For more information email me and I'll photocopy the article in *The Avant Gardener* of January 2005.

MYCORRHIZAL FUNGI NEEDED FOR BULBS: The *Avant Gardener* reports on such findings in the above issue. At least such has been very helpful growing the spring-flowering *Brodiaea (Triteleia) laza* 'Queen Fabiola'.

WHY PEOPLE DON'T LIKE SCIENCE: It has always puzzled and disturbed me some that many people don't like or trust science. And then I listened to a physicist on TV tell why champagne bubbles. No, it is not due to the carbon dioxide in the champagne although you have to have that. Dust, he said is the reason the bubbles continue to rise in the champagne after the initial pouring. Get rid of all the dust and the champagne doesn't bubble. Now isn't it nice to know that the champagne you drank on New Year's Eve was bubbling due to all the dust left in the glass before the champagne was poured.

AUTHORS OF FICTION I RECOMMEND: Robert K Tanenbaum has written both fiction and non-fiction. I have not read any of his non-fiction but have thoroughly enjoyed his works of fiction built around the Karp family. You can start this series with Butch Karp and his wife to be Marlene Ciampi not yet engaged to be married up to where the last I read their oldest child is in college. This is serious **adult** fiction with a laugh on every other page.

I also have enjoyed the science fiction/fantasy works of Anne McCarrery This now is something you can and should encourage your children to read. A.M. has also written one love story I accidently found out, but most of her works are about the dragons of Pern. She injects a lot of good sound moral principles into her works, and has both heroes and heroines.

POPULATION CONTROL: My son says I don't love people because of my stand on this issue. I'm not sure what the carrying capacity of the world is, but at our standard of living I'm sure we have exceeded it. I see no reason why we should strive to have asphalt, concrete and house roofs from sea to shining sea. Yes, I do love nature and in the U.S. of A. I see it being gradually crowded out along the coastlines. A tsunami would not wipe out quite the large numbers that it did in Asia in December although Florida would certainly be a disaster of great magnitude.

China saw the light and 30 years later it still has too many people. But, look at the economic growth they have had during that period when families were restricted to one

child each. I don't know how many of you are in the "no worries" crowd but consider the fact as written by John Seager in *the Reporter, Winter 2005*: "the world will end today---for 30,000 children who will die needlessly because they lack potable water, food, and the most rudimentary health care." I therefore write to you, if we can't take care of what we have, why are we raising more than we need for replacement?

Do you realize humans have been on the earth 10 to 100 thousand years and 'Mother Nature' kept our population below one billion till about 1830. In 175 years we have increased to 6.3 billion. We are multiplying like rabbits, rats, or would you prefer flies. Or, I note with interest, deer which in the U.S. of A. have increased from 0.5 million in early 1900s to 25-30 million today. It is time to change the tax code. **No tax break for more children than two.** In fact we might want to consider a tax penalty.

LAS CRUCES, N.M. AS A RETIREMENT COMMUNITY: Having just spent the month of December there for other reasons, I will say it bears looking into. At 3800 to 3900 feet of elevation and 9 inches/year of rain it is essentially high desert. December nights almost always were frosty. Days were usually sunny and warm (>60°). It did rain on eight different days that we were there but I don't think the total accumulation during that time was more than an inch. Apparently 2004 was a wet year for most of the State. on the 2nd of January **The Albuquerque Journal** had a headline about **11 inches of rain.** That was for all of 2004.

THE HORNET'S NEST by Jimmy Carter: This 2003 Historical novel of the American Revolution is interesting in that it centers around Georgia with South Carolina and Northern Florida having major roles. Although the main characters are fiction the history appears to be accurate. I enjoyed it and although I used to read historical novels in high school, my father got me started, I don't read them anymore. I did say to Cynthia that I don't think if I had written it, that I could have found a publisher. If you like historical novels or have reason to read about the American Revolution as it took place in the South, this is worth your while.

ASTRONAUTS: How different a "half-century" of space exploration makes on news worthiness. In the Dec. 26th Albuquerque Journal the reprovisioning of the Space Station made page A12, 4 inches under **Sudan Peace Deal Signing**, which was under a big spread on **Ancient Indian Village Found in Washington.** The Russian cargo spaceship docked with the space station and all it gets is a brief mentioning way back in the paper.

NOTE: Sending this by email hasn't turned out to be as easy as I thought. Part of my problem on the first issue thus sent is that I'm down in Harlingen, TX with my laptop and all my email addresses and technical help are up in the Dallas area. So please bear with me.

END