High Tide
Flood waters from the swollen Ocmulgee and Flint rivers wreak havoc on Georgia golf courses

Change of Course
After years of prodding, the EPA will alter its peer-review methods, hoping to stop uneven science

Destination: Mississippi
The Gulf Coast is becoming a gaming mecca, but golf would complete the package

Which of the following chemical formulations do you prefer?

44.4% Water-Soluble Bag
26.6% Liquid
10.5% Granular
4% No Preference

SUPERINTENDENTS RESPOND
The American Cyanamid Co. recently polled 125 superintendents on consumer preferences, EPA regulation, environmental activism and other maintenance issues. Their answers appear on page 21.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT
Delhi the first two-year turf school with course
Super Focus: Pock maintains family tradition
On the Green: You've got a crime dog in Pa
Planning paves way for Lake Michigan design
What's new in the marketplace?
Q&A: Lee Chang busy on two continents
Marketing Idea: Developing repeat customers
RISE conference opts for Southern exposure
GCSAA institutes new trade show policies

Golf Course Expo
Arnies to address Army at conference & trade show

Brauer's Minn. project awaits court resolution

COURSE MAINTENANCE
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COURSE MANAGEMENT
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Marketing Idea: Developing repeat customers
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SUPPLIER BUSINESS
RISE conference opts for Southern exposure
GCSSA institutes new trade show policies
What's new in the marketplace?

Seed companies re-think the rye market

About why get involved?
"That's a good question," Stanley said, "and I think it's a question a lot of Oregon seed companies are asking themselves. This year the trend continues from the last several years. We've seen declining prices and increased production.

"Everybody wants a piece of the overseeding market. It's big. A lot of distributors think it's glamorous. And it's a way to dump overproduction into a market that's not going to hurt them in other regions of the country."

Fifty million to 60 million pounds, or...
Nobody's ever happy during overseeding time — 'even your dog''

By MARK LESLIE

When a superintendent over-seeds, "your wife's unhappy, your dog's unhappy, your crew's unhappy, the members are unhappy — everybody's unhappy," says Tim Hiers.

"If I can tell you one thing, it's this: There are few people who look forward to overseeding," said the golf course manager at Cellier's Reserve in Naples, Fla.

"It's probably the most stressful thing a superintendent has to do," said Steve Tubbs who, as vice president of Turf Merchants in Tangent, Ore., hears from — and commiserates with — many greenkeepers around the country.

Speaking of Northern superintendents, Stubbs said: "He has to time it so he hits the overseeding just when the Bermudagrass is about to go off-color.

"If he's too early, the overseeded grass might come up and fight the Bermuda. Or if the heat comes back, the Bermuda stays active. If it cools too quick, they're in trouble. Every green needs soil temps to germinate.

"Superintendents have to do it under playing conditions. They have to blow it on. And members want it up immediately."

Overseeding in the South, said Turf Seed Marketing Manager Tom Stanley, is "critical to superintendents. Most of their play takes place in the wintertime and they need to have those courses looking crisp and green to attract golfers. A lot of that play in Arizona and Southern California is very expensive, and if they don't overseed they're shot out of the water because nobody wants to golf on brown fairways."

— Tom Stanley
Turf Seed

Overseeding business: High-volume but low-margin

Continued from page 1

Half of perennial ryegrass, is used for overseeding, according to Tubbs, who estimated annual use at 15 million pounds in California's Palm Springs area, 15 million in Florida, 10 million in Arizona, and 4 million to 5 million in Texas.

But, he added: "You're talking high-volume, low-dollar, very low-profit, very low-margin. This year we'll be lucky to make 10 percent on the perennial ryegrass overseeding business...

"You sell rye for 60 to 70 cents a pound. We pay farmers 42 cents per pound. Add royalties and freight, and there's not much profit there."

Despite the low profits, most seed companies have varieties in the marketplace. About three dozen firms entered 123 varieties in the latest National Turfgrass Evaluation Program tests (Seechart, page 16). Most of those varieties are available from dealers.

"When color and texture are achieved in any number of varieties, you're down to selling service, or quality, or personalities," Tubbs said. "We try to come up with different things like the best creeping bentgrass for overseeding, the best poa trivialis [rough bluegrass]...

"It's come to the point that your ability to get new business is predicated on your ability to produce poa trivialis."

More attention has been paid in the last five to seven years to developing poa trivialis than at any other time, Tubbs said.

Oregon State University reports more than 3,000 acres of poa trivialis in production in Oregon this year. "That's probably triple the numbers of five to seven years ago," Tubbs said.

Poa trivialis sells for a more substantial (than ryegrass) $2.55 to $2.50 per pound but less than its partner in a popular overseeding mix, bentgrass. Bentgrass sells for around $7.50 a pound, and coated bent (which doubles the volume) for about $3.50 a pound.

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