also have the skills to change some chromosomes so that Poa wouldn’t die out under heat stress. Joe Valentine produced a better grass under “no control” conditions. Surely the research centers at ag schools could change Poa seed so it is more durable. (Pennsylvania) A—The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council is doing all it can to help Penn State do the kind of research work that will benefit all turfgrass users. (Thank you for your membership.) Poa has been an object of interest for years, not only at Penn State but at other turfgrass research centers. Investigations have gone to both extremes: 1) how to keep it and make it a better grass and 2) how to get rid of it so that improved grasses can thrive. On thing is crystal clear—it takes excellent management regardless of the route you take.

Poa annua is not a simple, single apomictic strain as is Merion Kentucky bluegrass. It is highly diverse, from short-lived annuals to long-lived perennials. I’ve seen highly desirable patches of Poa turf in old greens that persisted year after year throughout the summers. When seed from these patches was planted, something quite different developed. Yes, genetic improvement has been attempted, but it seems more logical to develop strong types of perennial turfgrasses that, under good management, can choke Poa to the point of extinction.

Several chemicals are being used to reduce Poa and to allow the better grasses to thrive. It seems to be a sensible approach.

Severe Poa invasions tend to point out certain inadequacies in management. I am not saying that your Poa problems resulted from mismanagement, but I would advise a thorough check of everything (water, phosphorus levels, N-K-S balance, lime competition by strong turf species, soil disturbance during period of Poa germination, to mention a few).

When you bring problems to the Turfgrass Council they will get attention. Don’t hold your breath waiting for a change in Poa’s genetics. It takes 10 to 15 years to develop and prove a new superior grass.

Q—We’ve heard about a soilless method of growing turf for sodding and we would like to know more about it. How does it work and what are the advantages? It is economical? (New York) A—Two such proposals have come to my attention. The first was demonstrated at V.P.I., Blacksburg, Va., where Dr. Schmidt grew turf from seed in a soilless medium in shallow trays using a sterile porous cinder-like material on which to germinate the seeds. Recently I’ve learned of a British process that uses an artificial peat slurry with a wetting agent and foamed plastic as a carrier for the seeds. The advantages claimed are: 1) uniformity, 2) no grading, 3) rapid establishment when laid and 4) no weeds. The grass mat can be grown in four to five weeks, ready to be laid in the use area.

No data are available about cost. The idea has not caught on overwhelmingly. Yes, it does seem to have merit.

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