

12th Annual Field Day

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Cultural Practices for Weed Control

Dr. Chris Hall, a professor at the University of Guelph's Department of Environmental Biology and past Director of the Turfgrass Institute, was the next speaker on the program. Dr. Hall spoke on "Cultural Practices for Weed Control," and talked at length about changes in government thinking and philosophies as they relate to pesticides. Dr. Hall said that while there is not the same pressures for non-chemical weed control there were a few years ago, those same pressures will surface again. He suggested that we have to be pro-active in our dealings with pesticide issues.

First, Dr. Hall pointed out that maintenance is not a trivial task and it differs according to the sport or location. Soccer players want good footing, good ball bounce, and ball roll. Golf, on the other hand, is different. While golfers still require a good ball roll and playability, the course is very much a park-like setting. On highways—a completely different situation—grass performs functions such as cutting down on glare, and along with trees and shrubs, provides some noise reduction. It also helps prevent soil and wind erosion as well as slows runoff, has heat absorption qualities, and provides an area off the main thoroughfare for vehicles. No matter its use, grass recharges the ground water system and contributes to O₂ fixation and O₂ generation.

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Dr. Hall indicated that the key to good weed control is a dense healthy turf which is able to compete for light and temperature and suppress weed germination so they are slow to develop. Negative effects of weeds include poor turf—too much



competition—and increased labour and equipment costs. Furthermore, poor quality turf affords a place for insect and disease organisms to flourish and a haven for weeds which affect allergy sufferers.

Switching to non-chemical weed control, Dr. Hall talked about factors such as competition, the type of weed, turfgrass susceptibility, and cultural methods. For example: Is the area wet? and Does it suffer from salt damage? Some preventatives are proper seed bed preparation and elimination of seed production—many weeds are annuals and one mowing will remove the problem of seed production. Another venue is to exhaust the propagation organs. In the case of quack grass, stolons must be removed in their entirety by raking out or constant cultivation practices of bringing rhizomes to the surface to die. As for proper seeding with the correct species, consult with a turf specialist in your area. (The seeding rate and clean seed are discussed in the June 1999 issue of *Sports Turf Manager*, "The Seed Label," page 12.) The time of seeding is also important, particularly if you do not have irrigation—mid-August to mid-September is best. Dr. Hall then mentioned the advantages and disadvantages of species of Kentucky blue and perennial rye (see the table on the opposite page).

Dr. Hall ended with some final pointers on weed control:

- 1) Sod management—fertilizing, mowing, and watering. It is important that you survey for weeds and avoid scalping.
- 2) Mechanical weed control can be ac-

complished by mowing, tillage, and physical removal.

3) Non-chemical weed control begins with careful selection of species and cultivars. For example, Kentucky Bluegrass is less susceptible to weed invasion. Remember that cultivars of the same species will respond the same. Lastly, improving nitrogen reduces weed invasion in all species.

ORFA Training Opportunities and Partnerships

Next on the program was Jay Kivell. Jay is presently Manager of Parks and Facilities for the City of Guelph. His subject was Ontario Recreational Facilities Association (ORFA) training opportunities and partnerships. Jay heads up the annual professional development program for them. Member services consist of district meetings and the *Facility Forum*, a bi-monthly magazine (soon to be changing to quarterly). They have a facilities library located in Toronto where you may go to do research for newsletter articles, reports, etc. There is also a job search service in place. Regional training in aquatics programs is available for those who maintain pools. Safety training in propane management is also offered. Even if you operate a propane barbecue at work, a certificate is required. An ice making manual is available, plus log books and other texts. If you have a minimum of 30 people, ORFA will hold a propane course at your place of work at a cost of \$60 per person.

ORFA has formed 34 partnerships with organizations such as Algonquin College, Seneca College, the NHL, and several provincial government departments. Each year, training is run at the University of Guelph, in partnership with the Office of Open Learning, in Parks Operations, Parks

