THATCH
What a Maryland Agronomist Recommends

For several hundred years, thatch has been used successfully to offer shelter for man and animals. If thatch can protect life from the elements such as rain or snow, heat or cold, it must be considered an insulator or sealant. Therefore, suggests A. J. Powell, University of Maryland agronomist, is there any doubt that the accumulation of thatch on turf may also protect the soil from these elements?

When used as human shelter, thatch is generally composed of reeds, rushes, or grasses (especially straw) that are combed or oriented so the long blades lie parallel for a very close fit.

Many lawn maintenance operations tend to give the same effect, said Powell, to the tightly intermingled layer of partially decomposed or undecomposed leaves, stems and roots which accumulate beneath the actively growing grass.

Mowing continuously in the same directional pattern, heavy irrigation and fertilization, use of vigorous species, failure to remove clippings, and delayed mowing are practices that most often causes rapid build-up of the organic layer at the soil surface.

In effect, Powell said, thatch decreases the aggressiveness of turfgrass by restricting the movement of water, air and fertilizers into the soil. Irrigation water and light or rapid rainfall can be completely repelled by this organic layer.

If thatch prevents water from reaching the soil surface, Powell explained, rooting depths will be shallow and a drought-susceptible condition will exist.

Also sheltered by the thatch are many turfgrass disease organisms and insects. Control is then made very difficult because of the high pest incidence and inability to get the pesticide to the organism causing the problem.

Thatch is much easier to prevent than eradicate. Thatch seldom becomes a problem in less than four years after lawn establishment; and with low or medium maintenance, thatch may never accumulate.

To approach the thatch problem, Powell recommended, decide which type of program is needed: (a) preventive control to avoid excessive build-up or (b) curative control for an existing thatch problem. Generally if the thatch layer is over 1/2 inch thick, the curative control is necessary.

From the preventive maintenance approach, Powell advised moderate fertilization, periodic mechanical thatching and clipping removal should be considered. Also the soil pH should be maintained between 6.5 and 7.0 to help create an environment that is favorable for microorganisms which help decompose the organic material.

For curative control, remove as much thatch as possible and as often as possible without permanent damage to the grass.

A KROMER BROOM DOES THE JOB, YEAR-ROUND!

Spring • sweep streets, parking lots.
Summer • sweep tennis courts, playgrounds.
Fall • windrow leaves, thatch lawns.
Winter • sweep snow off streets, sidewalks, skating rinks.

Mount a Kromer Industrial Broom on a Yazoo Tractor and you've got an unbeatable combination for maneuverability and heavy-duty sweeping. The broom is easily removed for adding the out-front Yazoo 42, 48, or 60-inch cutting head. Write or call today for further information.

KROMER CO.
Mound, Minnesota 55364
612-472-4167

THURICIDE

Safe for all forms of life except the target insect

THURICIDE is a biological insecticide. It paralyzes the digestive tract of certain species of harmful leaf eating insects. They soon stop feeding and die within a short time.

It is safe for all other forms of life including beneficial insects such as insect predators and bees, man, mammals, birds and fish.

You'll like the way THURICIDE mixes and sprays. It's miscible with water, mixes well with stickers, fungicides and other pesticides and can be used in all types of spray equipment.

Learn the full THURICIDE story — write or call 312-757-5800. Out of state call 800-323-5072

INTERNATIONAL MINERALS & CHEMICAL CORP.
Lawn & Garden Dept., 16th & State St.
Chicago Heights, Illinois 60411
DEALER AND DISTRIBUTOR INQUIRIES INVITED
meeting dates

Dates for this column need to reach the editor's desk by the first of the month preceding the date of publication.

Annual Southern California Turfgrass Institute, main theater at California State Polytechnic College, Pomona, May 19-20.

Ohio Forestry Association Paul Bunyan Show at the Ohio State Fairgrounds at Columbus, May 22-24.

Outdoor Living Review, Ohio State University, Don Scott Airport Grounds, June 5 and 6.

22nd Annual Nurserymen's Refresher Course, sponsored by the California Association of Nurserymen at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, June 9-11.

Purdue-Michigan State Weed Day at Agronomy Farm, Lafayette, Ind., June 18.

Penn State Field Day, formally dedicating the Joseph Valentine Turfgrass Research Center, June 24 and 25.

Ohio Chapter, International Shade Tree Conference, at the USDA Shade Tree and Ornamental Plants Laboratory at Delaware, Ohio, July 8.


American Sod Producers Association 4th annual conference and field day, Ramada Dorchester Inn, Dolton, Ill., and the H & E Sod Farm, Momence, Ill., July 28-30.

Toro Expanding Again

Toro Manufacturing Corporation, Bloomington, Minn., is expanding its headquarters office space by two-thirds. Groundbreaking began in February and completion is expected by early July. The expansion is the second in less than a year. Work on the Toro plant in Windom, Minn., has just been completed, virtually doubling manufacturing and office facilities there.

What's New in Turf Irrigation?

TURF Cam Action Rotary Pop-up!

"IT NEVER STOPS TURNING"

Precision designed and engineered to give years of maintenance free service.

- Covers up to 68 ft. dia. (Avail. full/part circle)
- Heavy brass and bronze construction
- Smooth action gives controlled watering pattern
- Great for low pressure areas
- Designed for easy installation
- Most economical concealed rotary available

Tell us about your irrigation problems. Expert prompt design service at no cost or obligation. Write for catalog.

TURF IRRIGATION CORPORATION
73 Mall Drive, Commack, N.Y. 11725

MOVING?

Changing Your Address?

If so, notify our circulation department right away to be certain the magazine reaches you at your new location. The Post Office won't forward your copies. So when you write us, make it at least three weeks in advance of your moving date, and include your old address, as well as the new one. We'll see you don't miss a single issue.

Send old and new address information to:

WEEDS TREES and TURF

Circulation Department
9800 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44102

MAY, 1970

For More Details Circle (124) on Reply Card 49