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Special for This Issue

Crownvetch

The founder of the Crownvetch industry, Dr. Fred V. Grau, and the biggest users of this legume discuss its merits for controlling slope erosion.

Accidents and Fires

J. L. Shopen of Farmland Industries calls attention to the profit waste that can result from fires and accidents. He offers suggestions for successful preventive programs.

Urban, Industrial Weed Control

Allied Biological Control Corporation, Wellesley, Mass., known for its aquatic weed efforts, also has an extensive land weed control business.

Kentucky Golf Estates Are Hydroseeded

Landscape agronomist Ken Arnold reports his prescription for seeding both the golf course and home lawns.

American Sod Producers Association Report

Hyacinth Control Society Report

Regular Features

Editorial: Your Interest in Building Public Interest in Trees

Insect Report

Meeting Dates

Sod Industry Section: Seed quality standards

New Products

Trimmings

Classifieds

Index to Advertisers

The Cover

You don't need to mow it, fertilize it, weed it, or water it. You just look at it and enjoy it. That's what the proponents of Crownvetch say. It's hard to get started, but the rewards come later. The result can be like the cover picture, taken along Interstate 80 in Pennsylvania. Crownvetch is planted along the entire length of this super highway from New Jersey to the Ohio line. But highways are just one area the legume can be used. Anywhere there is a slope that needs to be preserved and landscaped, Crownvetch is a prospect. The cover feature discusses why, beginning on page 6.
Your Interest in Building Public Interest in Trees

If you're traveling and pass me by, stop, for you're as welcome as can be.

The sun is hot, the day is long. Listen. The wind and my leaves will play a song.

Stop and rest, if just for awhile. Later, you'll be rested and ready to walk another mile.

But while you're here, take care of me. For I must be here for the future to see.

SUE COPENHAGEN, ninth grader at Wayne Central School, Ontario, was writing about trees. She and a flock of other pupils from grades five through nine were asked to write a poem or essay on the subject: "The World's Heritage—Trees." The phrase was the theme for the International Shade Tree Conference and the contest was part of the 46th annual conference at Rochester, N.Y., recently. Cash prizes were given and grand winners also attended the conference and were recognized.

All in all, the contest generated a great deal of interest in trees on the part of the youngsters and their teachers.

During the shade tree conference, several executives of the National Arborist Association presented a plaque to Rochester University representatives for an outstanding purple beech, estimated to be 125 to 135 years old. Television newsmen were present, so thousands of area residents, for a moment or two, had their attention focused on trees.

NAA plans to conduct a similar plaque presentation in each host city where it meets, hopefully to draw attention to trees and the organization, reports Dan Lynch, executive secretary.

The writing contest and NAA's program are just two of many projects you could duplicate in your town to create more interest in trees. Your interest in building public interest in trees is at least two-fold. Such a project contains excellent public relations value, through the publicity of your company's efforts. With concern establish for trees, either by a poem like Sue's that carries within it a plea for tree care, or in some other way, it follows that people might begin thinking about professional tree care.

Attaching value or significance of some kind to trees is a quick way to draw attention to them. For example:

Mr. H. P. Bowser, manager of Keystone Tree Service—Has anyone called attention to the national champion thornless honeylocust in your town of Chambersburg, Pa.? And Mr. F. C. Henderson, your company might give some thought on what to do about the champion spruce pine there in Tallahassee, Fla. Mr. P. M. Ceece and Mr. C. E. Sowell—your tree companies can weave your program around the champion eastern wahoo there in Manhattan, Kan.

If a plaque or other recognition already has been thought of, perhaps you might consider donating your services to care for these special trees.

You need not have champions, however, to have a successful program. Give some thought to picking the outstanding specimen for just your town and how you might publicize the fact. An ongoing program could be to select the outstanding specimen of each variety. What about plaques to the property owners?

Do some trees have historical significance, or are there interesting stories about them?

Arbor Day is the natural timing for a once-a-year a program, but events could be scheduled periodically.

You might be as surprised as Wilbur Wright, administrator of the New York State Parks, at the enthusiasm that can be developed over trees. He told the story at the shade tree conference of slum residents who descended upon a young tough bent on defacing a neighborhood tree planted in a once-treeless community.

Besides improving your company image and perhaps increasing business, a program of tree promotion could also perform a valuable industry service. With people's concern aroused over trees, there is greater likelihood that you can spray and the public will realize that rather than killing birds and polluting the air, soil and water, you're actually protecting trees and improving the world we live in. You have every right to sit in the front seat of the environmental bandwagon. Why not climb aboard?
Asplundh is speeding up delivery dates on Aerial Lift Trucks

Asplundh has scheduled regular production on the Forestry or General Service bodies, both complete on GMC chassis. These 45' lifts with a capacity of 350 pounds in all positions are fully insulated and have high pressure hydraulic systems to the baskets. Ready for fast delivery. Can also be purchased with a rugged Asplundh Chipper, either 12" or 16" with adjustable telescoping exhaust chute and bonnet, new folding feed table.

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This is the Chipper that has been helping to cut down on Air Pollution for the past twenty-five years.
Once you know the characteristics of Crownvetch, you'll think of any number of uses. Its adaptation to environmental variations and omnipotence over natural and man-made destructive forces are that outstanding.

This broad endorsement is not to imply that Crownvetch is the plant for all purposes; rather, it conveys the opinion that the plant has qualities that make it supreme for a wide variety of uses.

For openers, Crownvetch, Coronilla varia, is described as having extreme drought and cold tolerance and almost complete freedom from insect disease troubles. It flourishes in extremely poor soil, and crowds out grasses and weeds. Hedging not at all, proponents state Crownvetch has “zero maintenance.” And in the words of its discoverer, Crownvetch is “utterly beautiful,” blooming in colors from white to pink to reddish purple flowers all summer long.

A perennial legume, Crownvetch seeds profusely and also spreads by strong fleshy rhizomes. The Penn-gift strain (others are Chemung and Emerald) has coarse stems from two to six feet long that are strongly branched. Numerous rhizomes may develop to 10 feet or more, with new plants rising from the nodes.

Crownvetch is known best for its use to control erosion on highway slopes. Says Dr. Fred Grau, discoverer and founder of the Crownvetch industry:

“Every slope is an advertisement for Crownvetch, whether it has been planted or not. Once you’ve seen slopes covered with a Crownvetch blanket, you wonder why other slopes haven’t been protected in the same way.”

Those who might not agree with Dr. Grau’s opinion of the beauty of its pink and purple flowers and deep green foliage, nevertheless will be impressed by another contribu-

For Erosion Control, 'No Maintenance,' and Beauty:

CROWNVETCH
tion characterized by the color green—money. Pennsylvania highway officials estimate that the 18,000 acres of Crownvetch planted along rights-of-way since 1947 are now saving taxpayers in excess of $100,000 annually in mowing costs alone. No estimate is possible on the amount of money saved that would have been used in rebuilding slopes that had eroded away. The great opportunity for the Crownvetch industry, believes Dr. Grau, is in "revitalizing eroding, degenerating grassed slopes which have been improperly maintained. Success has been remarkable when Pennsylvanians' Crownvetch seed has been hydroseeded into the gullied slopes without seedbed preparation."

Crownvetch is an ideal cover from the standpoints of beauty, erosion control, soil enrichment and "zero maintenance" for any hard-to-maintain area. Among these, Dr. Grau suggests medians on highways, slopes around factories, commercial buildings, parking lots, schools, parks and golf courses; ski slopes, cemeteries, strip-mined areas, and decorative plantings around homes.

Penn Central Endorses It

Penn Central Railroad has established Crownvetch around its Big Four Yard near Indianapolis. Penn Central right-of-way specialists see Crownvetch as a "valuable ally" in maintaining yards and roadbeds where mowing is extremely expensive and chemical control not always effective. "Chemical weed killers," a Penn Central release stated recently, "frequently defoliate but leave stalks standing which obstruct vision along rights-of-way and grade crossings until they are removed. Crownvetch hugs the ground in a dense green mass and eliminates this problem entirely."

But doesn't the mass of vines constitute a fire hazard? In the truly dormant season, "no more than any other plant," replies Dr. Grau. He adds that Crownvetch more properly can be described as "fire retardant."

Because of the plant's exceptional drought tolerance, it stays green in extremely dry weather. Large quantities of moisture in its stems prevent flash fires as happen with grasses and weeds.

When and Where Discovered

Dr. Grau, agronomist, world turf authority, and president of Grasslyn, Inc., College Park, Md., attributes his discovery of Crownvetch to his taking the right fork in the road. The year was 1935 while he was an extension agronomist for Pennsylvania State University. "I was traveling from Allentown to Reading for a meeting, but had some time to spare. I came to several forks in the road and just happen to take the right ones to find Crownvetch growing on a cinder and shale pile. I was struck by the utter beauty of the plant."

The entire Crownvetch industry in this country is thought to have started from a single plant introduced as an impurity in an alfalfa

Highway interchanges, like the one at far left on Interstate 81 near Winchester, Va., are ideal places to plant Crownvetch. Mowing would have been practically impossible; cost of planting shrubbery prohibitive. The legume had covered almost everything except solid bedrock. Rights-of-way are steep and tiered in the mountainous region of Pennsylvania along Highway 322 northwest of Harrisburg. Crownvetch is working well to cut down erosion. Numerous uses, as for the lake bank above, serve both utilitarian and esthetic purposes.
Crownvetch offers a number of advantages over other types of plantings in urban areas. The legume soon envelopes and conceals trash. It stays a deep green through extremely dry weather, as shown above in State College, Pa., and moisture retained in its coarse stalks gives it fire-retardant qualities. Commercial developments on land carved out of hillside have used Crownvetch to control slope erosion. The picture at left is a business office building in College Park, Md. At right, Crownvetch worked its way into crevices of this cliff edge to Pennsylvania Highway 322.

field sometime between 1905 and 1910. The site was the Robert Gift farm near Virginville, Pa. Because of Dr. Grau's discovery on the Gift farm and the university-sponsored research that followed, the name Penngift Crownvetch was assigned for identification purposes. Other varieties have been developed from Penngift with the help of Dr. Grau. Dr. Grau hand-harvested some seed and collected some crowns from the Gift field and started a new planting for commercial seed production in 1940. The first commercial seed harvest was in 1946; the first ton produced in 1951. The Penngift name was assigned in 1954, and the first Blue Tag Certified seed came in 1961.

Before Dr. Grau could sell the seed to state or federal governments, he found that he had to establish his own competition to comply with
regulations requiring that more than one source be available for products purchased.

Dr. Grau, through Grasslyn, Inc., has some 2,000 acres in production now around State College, Pa., and Omaha, Neb.

Attesting to Pennington Crownvetch's ability to spread, Dr. Grau said a single clump planted eight years ago along Highway 36 near Omaha has now spread to 5,000 sq. ft.

The longest continuous highway usage, he said, is the recently completed Interstate 80 stretching from New Jersey to the Ohio line.

Though Pennsylvania has made greatest use of Crownvetch, Dr. Grau said seed or crown shipments had gone to 40 some states. It grows in most parts of the country, from almost the entire length of Trans-Canada Highway 401, to coal strip-mined areas of Kentucky to irrigation ditchbanks in El Paso, Tex. As other examples, you can view it at parks in Peoria, Ill., and Dallas, Tex.; on a golf course as Moselem Springs, Pa.; and on the slopes of a recharge water basin on Long Island.

But to really view Crownvetch "en masse," just take a drive through Pennsylvania.

University-Tested Since 1947

A joint research project by Pennsylvania State University and the state highway department was begun in 1947 to evaluate various legumes and grasses for slope control.

J. M. Duich, agronomist at Penn State, reporting at the first Crownvetch Symposium in 1964, summed up that early testing this way:

"The specific results of the tests showed that certain grasses produced an adequate cover but later showed evidence of serious thinning out, in spite of additional fertilization. In contrast, Crownvetch when seeded alone, established full cover by the end of the second full growing season, but because of the slow rate of seedling development, did not provide adequate protection during the first season of growth.

"It was very evident that, where grass-legume mixtures were used, the development of the legume was directly affected by the competition of the faster-growing grasses."

Because the study showed a grass-legume mixture to be the best for establishing a permanent cover, another series of tests was conducted to find which mixture was best.

In studies continued through 1961, Duich concluded that Crownvetch seeded with either red fescue, Kentucky-31, or domestic ryegrass provided excellent slope protection, with the Crownvetch taking over as the permanent cover after the second growing season.

Under the conditions of the experiment, the ryegrass-Crownvetch combination showed the best indication of permanent Crownvetch cover.

Seeding rates per acre ranged from 25 to 60 pounds of grass seed to 20-30 pounds of Crownvetch seed. The recommended rate at present from Grasslyn, Inc., is 20 pounds of Crownvetch and 40 pounds of either red fescue or ryegrass. (See Planting Suggestions).

Highway Department Evaluation

Also at the 1964 symposium, Pennsylvania roadside engineers D. R. Rodgers, H. P. Judd and R. S. Ross reported that Crownvetch had proved "highly satisfactory" on all roadside soils except where toxicity is apparently present. These soils ranged from silts to solid bedrock, with many sands, gravels, shales, clays and schists, they said.

"Benched cuts have permitted us..."
Penngift Crownvetch

Planting Suggestions

From the top, Crownvetch is shown actual size in bloom (colors can be any shade from white to purple); seed pod; and in the dormant stage.