



Dr. Mike Britton explains the experimental fungicide plots to a group attending the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation Field Day.

ILLINOIS TURF GRASS FIELD DAY

On September 10 and 13, the Illinois Turfgrass Field Day was held. Following are some of the observations and comments from this event.

Weed Control

Dr. Fred Slife, Associate Head of Agronomy, commented that although chemical weed control has come a long way, there are many unsolved problems left. Selective control of perennial grasses in turf seems to be a relatively impossible problem. At present, there is still no better way than digging or removing with a sod cutter such weeds as bentgrass, nimblewill and tall fescue. While bentgrass often becomes established at the time of initial seeding, nimblewill may spread rapidly from seed in well-established turf. This establishment might result from inhibitor production by the nimblewill plants.

Weed control on the plots showed Tupersan to again be quite satisfactory used at the time of seeding. Five pounds active material per acre on six common varieties of Kentucky bluegrass did not show this material to have any varietal selectivity. The Tupersan not only gave effective control of crabgrass, but also kept out lovegrass and purslane.

Dr. Slife pointed out that certain strains of creeping bentgrass were very sensitive to Tupersan. This strain sensitivity was greater than any he had seen with any other crops or chemicals. Fourteen strains of bentgrass were treated at relatively high rates with Tupersan. Lagreen 445 and C-10 were injured, but the other 12 strains were not effected.

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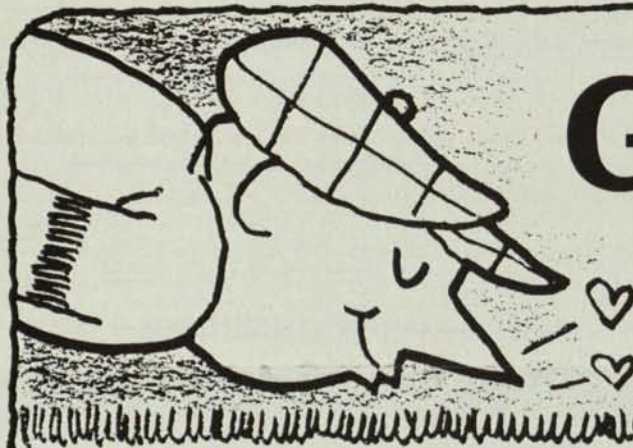
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Disease and Disease Control

Dr. M. P. Britton led a tour of the fungicide plots. One of the experimental fungicides proved to be phytotoxic at extremely low rates, while two others were ineffective in controlling dollar spot. Dollar spot was the only disease causing trouble on the greens this year. One experimental material, DAC-2787, proved a very effective fungicide for dollar spot control. A four-year study using standard fungicide materials at recommended dates was started this year to determine not only the effectiveness of control, but also the effect of each on the soil microorganisms. The presence of a severe infection of stripe smut on Pennlu creeping bentgrass was noted. The injury from this disease was not nearly as evident at the time of the field day as it was earlier in the season.

Several diseases of bluegrass have been troublesome this year. Fusarium patch was a special problem on bluegrass in mid-season. These circular areas about one foot in diameter were beginning to fill in from the surrounding areas. Dollar spot, leaf spot, stripe smut, and rust were all active and causing damage to the bluegrass.

Selection for disease resistance from 10,000 Merion seedlings has produced some plants with resistance to rust. Other selections have been made for powdery mildew. These selections, especially those of the merion type, offer some promise as future turf-grasses.

Fertility Studies

With one high-level application a year for the last four years, urea-form has produced an excellent turf. Similarly, the use of more rapid release materials at lower rates and more frequent applications has produced fine turf.

Where nitrogen plus phosphorus and/or potassium were applied on these relatively fertile soils to seven different turfgrasses for the last four years, no noticeable response has occurred from the use of P and/or K.

On a fertility study on creeping bent no noticeable differences have been apparent this year between areas where from 7-14 lbs. of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. have been applied. With the use of the more rapidly available forms of nitrogen there were periods when flush growth occurred, which resulted in the scalping of the turf.

Grass Varieties and Mixtures

Fourteen bentgrass strains have been tested under greens conditions for the last several years. Toronto, Washington, Cohansey, Pennross, and other of the common strains continue to perform well. One new selection, from Bob-O-Link, has performed exceptionally well this year. Cohansey was more heavily infected with dollar spot than the others. With a mixture of C-7 and Pennlu established four years ago, the C-7 has dominated to the extent that Pennlu is hardly evident in the plots.

Kentucky bluegrasses planted either along or as mixtures look very good. Newport has good fall color, possibly due to its resistance to rust. Pennlawn creeping red fescue, and the other red fescue look exceedingly well except under frequent irrigation. With frequent watering melting out had occurred to such an extent that only an occasional plant remained. Merion and Meyer Zoysia maintained at 1/4 inch were producing a dense and attractive turf. The Merion maintained at this low cut was receiving the same maintenance as the bentgrass greens. It will be necessary to maintain the Merion at this height for several years to determine its adaptability to this practice.

A large area has been seeded to Poa annua for fungicide and herbicide testing next year. Six weeks after seeding the annual bluegrass seed heads were being formed.

In the seed mixture trials, one of the mixtures containing a large percentage of perennial ryegrass with only a little Kentucky bluegrass seed produced a desirable turf. The ryegrass had disappeared and the Kentucky bluegrass was predominating. The mixtures with tall fescue and bentgrass were quite poor.

Other Plots

Other plots showed the effects of mowing height on bentgrass, variability in bentgrass, frequent fertilizer application, etc.

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