

## Director's Column



### Dennis C. Wilson Biography

- Work Experience:** Sunset Ridge Country Club  
1964 till present  
Assistant Superintendent — 1971-1977  
Superintendent — 1978-present
- Education:** Eight-week Turf Course at University of Ill. — 1967  
A.S. Degree from Rutgers University
- Married:** Wife — Pat
- Children:** Amy - 13; Michael - 11; Megan - 6
- Hobbies:** Enjoys golf, bowling, working with Cub Scouts and school functions

### Pearlwort — Old Weed New Problem

by Dennis C. Wilson, Supt.  
Sunset Ridge C.C.

In the sixties, while cutting greens, I noticed three dark green patches of grass, each about as big as a half dollar. They were always green no matter when the conditions. So I decided it was a new type of Bent and I would be famous — cars, boats and girls. I would have it all. About a week or so later, Dom Grotti, former Supt. of Sunset Ridge Country Club, asked me if I had noticed the pearlwort on three greens. Pearlwort, I asked, you mean my super grass is a weed? Yes, Dom said, now get a cup changer and plug out that weed.

That wasn't the end of the pearlwort. It seems we get a little infestation on one or two greens a year.

Turf Management by H. Burton Musser reads, "Pearlwort (*sagina procumbens*) is a viny perennial that spreads by creeping stems which root at the joints. It tolerates close clipping and forms solid patches on greens that closely resembles a fine-textured grass." Turfgrass Science and Culture by James B. Beard states, "Pearlwort or birdseye is a creeping broadleaf type perennial that vegetates by stolons." The best method of control is use of a strong, vigorous grass. Selective treatments of herbicides such as Dicamba, Endothall or Mecoprop will give marginal control.

I have tried going around with a plastic spray bottle and spot treating each problem, to treating whole greens in spring and fall with Dicamba with some success. I don't want to push the greens by raising the height of cut or using more Nitrogen in order to check its spread.

Talk about turnabout, my supergrass has turned into a super headache.

## Turf-Seed, Inc. Field Days

by Fred Opperman, CGCS  
Glen Oak C.C., Glen Ellyn, IL

On June 17, 18, and 19, 1987, I had the pleasure of visiting the seed testing plots of Turf-Seed, Inc. in Hubbard, Oregon. The first day, our group was given a tour of golf courses in the Portland area. Our tour guide was Dick Malpass, ex-president of the GCSAA and a retired superintendent of the area. The courses we saw were almost 100 percent **Poa annua**. The giant Cyprus and Douglas Fir trees were spectacular when they lined the fairways and were the backgrounds for the greens. Some of these trees were pushing 100 feet with a diameter of 5 to 6 feet. The most serious problem the courses have is controlling pink snowmold for about 6 months of the year. Golf is played all 12 months of the year. They average only 14 inches of snow, and it usually melts after a few days. Lots of misty weather and rain.

The second day, we toured some growers' fields in the morning and saw how Penncross and Penneagle are grown for seed production. We got into the fields with the growers and learned of their trials, tribulations, failures, and successes. The procedure for growing a certified bent like Penncross is very strict and controlled. It is closely watched over by the state of Oregon, Turf-Seed, Inc., and the patent holder, Penn State. The following are the steps taken to put certified blue tag seed on your course:

- ★ Improved turfgrass varieties are developed by either a private breeder, company, or university.
- ★ Breeder seed from varieties selected for performance and seed yield is grown in 1/10- to 1/4-acre insulated breeder blocks.
- ★ Foundation seed is multiplied in 5-acre plots for distribution to selected growers.
- ★ Seed growers check field history in accordance with certification procedures so that no conflicting species or varieties are planted on the same ground.
- ★ Foundation seed is charcoal planted, part of the extra care that contract growers take to assure a quality product. (This means that the seed is disc seeded on, say, 3-foot centers, and a slurry of charcoal is sprayed over the top of this row in a 1-inch band. Then the field is sprayed with Karmex to kill any and all weeds and grasses between the seeded rows. The charcoal absorbs the herbicide, and the selected seeded species can then grow with no competition).
- ★ A certification specialist from Oregon State University inspects the seedlings.
- ★ Fieldmen from the breeders assess and solve problems as they arise.
- ★ Another certification specialist inspects the field prior to harvest.
- ★ The grower harvests his crop, making sure accurate records are kept and the equipment is free of contaminants.
- ★ The seed is cleaned and bagged in one of more than 200 commercial and 30 private cleaners and then given a lot number that traces the seed back to its production field.
- ★ A seed certification sampler draws a random sample to be analyzed at the Oregon State seed lab.
- ★ The seed sample is analyzed for weed seed, off-types, other species, and inert matter.

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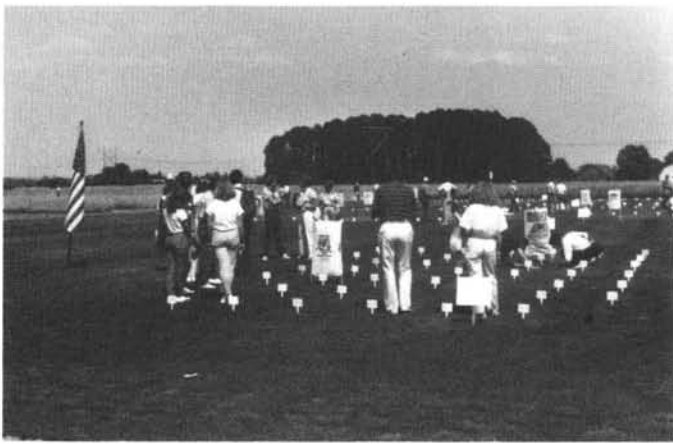
The afternoon of this second day, we attended the 5th Annual Turf Field Day held by Turf-Seed, Inc. Bill Rose and Bill Meyer had a beautiful 66-acre test facility. Believe me, there wasn't a blade of grass out of place. It was darn near impossible to find a weed in their test plots. Dr. Bill Meyer told me he is testing 96 varieties of turf grasses. This is the 13th year that Pure-Seed Testing has been conducting grass breeding and evaluation at this location. Turf-Seed, Inc. is involved in the contract production of 21,000 acres of certified grass seed production along with small acreages of wild flowers and sugar beets. The trade name of their wildflowers is "Bloomers". The sad part of this tour was learning that our bent seed will still be in short supply this coming fall. But in 1988, the production will be there, for more fields are being contracted to grow bent. All we need is good growing and harvesting weather for the 1988 crop.

The morning of the third day, we visited more growers' fields and saw more of the equipment used in this industry. We also saw a demonstration of crop spraying by two planes. Afterwards, the planes landed in our field so we could get a first-hand look into this aerial acrobat.

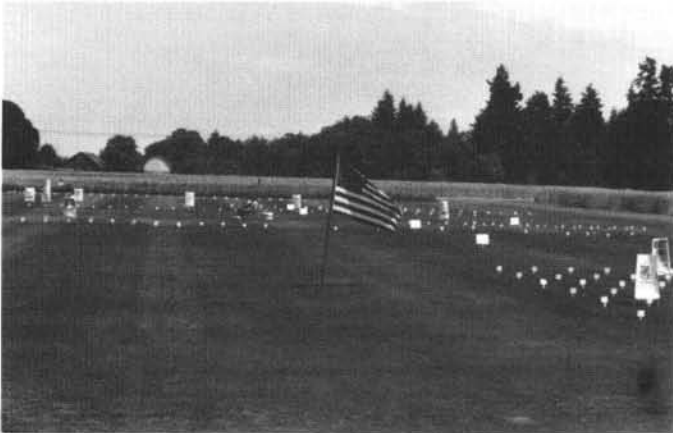
The equipment the growers' used looked just like ours on the golf course and for the most part has been modified by the various growers to fit into their operations. We visited one grower to whom I gave the title of "Dr. Tinker". This guy hardly had a standard piece of equipment. He even made a spray wagon that would follow him in the field while he walked, killing the weeds and other grasses not allowed among that certain species. This machine was fastened to his belt by a flexible cord on a spring, and this 150-gallon, three-wheel vehicle would follow him like a dog at heel. If he stopped, the machine would stop; if he turned left or right, the machine would follow at his pace. From this one machine, he had three hoses so three men could walk a field and cover a wider area. He was quite an interesting grower.

The procedure for planting Penncross for seed production is the following: The area to be planted for seed has had a row crop on it for a couple of years. The area is prepared in the fall of the year, plowed, disced, and leveled. The area is allowed to sprout weeds, and these, in turn, are killed by using "Round-Up". A second application is used in the fall, if required. This is done again in the spring after any sprouts emerge. The field is then spring planted by hand using a spacing of 40-inch rows with the Penncross stolon/sprig hand planted every 18 inches. It takes about two-thirds of a square foot of stolon bed to plant one acre. After a couple of weeks, a herbicide spray is used to kill any broadleaf weeds. The rows of Penncross are planted in the three clones of Pennlu, 9(38) (5), and 11(38)4. Remember that Penncross has three parents, and as the field is planted, one row will be Pennlu, one row 9(38) (5), and the third will be a row of 11(38)4. In the field, you can see the difference between the three clones. These clones will then cross-pollinate,

(cont'd. page 6)



1. The bluegrass test plots at Turf-Seed, Inc., Hubbard, Oregon.



and the seed they produce will be certified Penncross. This seed field will be harvested for about 4 years; and after that time, it will be killed off, and a row crop will be planted for a couple of years before it will go back into a grass seed crop field.

The planting of Penneagle is different since it is a seeded bent. It is planted as mentioned earlier by being seeded with a charcoal band sprayed over it, and then the field is sprayed with Karmex to kill any and all other grasses and weeds. But the amazing thing is the rate of seed per acre. Would you believe (those of us who have seeded tees, greens, and turf nursery at a rate of 2 to 5 pounds per 1,000 square feet) that the seeded fields for Penneagle seed production is seeded at 15 grams per acre! One ounce equals 31.1035 grams. So, the growers are using less than 1/2 ounce of seed per acre! They have to mix the seed with four parts of corn meal to get the rate down that low. Heck, we lose that much seed between the bag and the spreader. But they have to seed so low for a higher seed rate per acre. If they seeded any higher, the field would be a mess, and the harvesting machine could hardly get through.

We also got a chance to tour a couple of seed cleaning plants. Here again, it was impressive to see the lengths they go to to keep the seed clean and separate from each other.



2. The hay racks used to transport the crowd around the 66-acre test plots.



3. A stand of cereal rye in which various seed plots are established in about a 15' x 15' plot. The cereal rye prevents cross-pollination.



4. A propane burner which burns off the fields at the end of the harvest.

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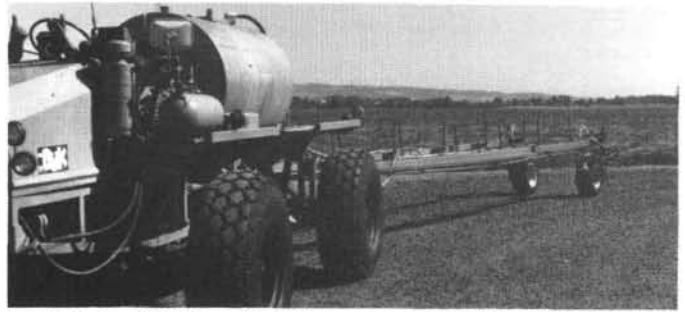
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## Field Day Pictures



5. This is a “Rubber Duck” spray wagon with a 60-foot boom.



6. Another “Rubber Duck” with the seed disc behind. The tank would hold the charcoal slurry to be sprayed over the seeded rows.



7. Tony Meyer and Walter Fuchs, Jr. in front of a John Deere Turbo 7720 seed harvester on one of the growers’ farms.



8. A crop spraying plane that sprays 5 gallons per acre and can do 40 acres per load. The plane has a 275-gallon capacity.



9. Standing in a field of tall fescue that will be harvested this year.



10. Tony and Walter looking a little bored — don't know why with Pam standing nearby.



12. Tony and Walter checking a newly sprigged field of Penn-cross. This field won't be harvested until 1988.



11. Your Editor checking Pennlu in a field of Penncross that will be harvested this year. You can spot Pennlu; being a darker color, it stands out. It is planted every third row, as you can see as you look across the field.



13. A field that was just swathed in preparation for seed harvest. The field is swathed first and left to dry for "x" number of days, depending upon the humidity and sunlight. Then the large harvesting machines go up and down the swathed rows picking off the seed.

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