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## the Bull Sheet

(continued from page 30)

John Turner, senior sales representative for AgroEvo, presented two \$500 scholarships to seniors Reed Kemp and Alicia McDonald from Purdue University at the Midwest Regional Turf Expo in January. This annual scholarship assists turfgrass students in meeting the educational needs of their professed interest in turfgrass management.

Susan and Scott Witte began their family with the birth of their first child, Kori Lynn, on January 29, 1997. Kori weighed 8 lbs., 14 oz. Congratulations!

Joe Murphy, 630-792-0416, is looking for an assistant or foreman position. Eleven years experience, college degree, resume upon request.

Congratulations to Kristin and Mike Siefken who were married on March 1, 1997. Mike is the superintendent at Woodstock C.C.

For sale: Six Toro Series IV greens mowers ('82-'84), two Toro Series IV greens mowers ('78), '69 Ryan Mataway dethatcher, '91 Cushman Core Destroyer attachment (used twice), '92 GreenIron 3000 greens roller (used one season) and two complete Cushman 5th wheel hitches ('93/'94, never used). For further information, call Tim Kelly at Village Links 630-469-2077, Ext. 1.

John Czapla is seeking a second assistant position. Recent graduate of Iowa State University specializing in turfgrass management. Please call 847-966-2468. (Resume is on file with editor.)

Congratulations to Laura and George Ott on the birth of their fourth son, Michael Thomas, who was born on February 6, 1997. The Ott's other children are George, 7; Jim, 5; and Dan, 3.

Here are the responses that I have received to date for a list of local horticulturists/gardeners for the local clubs. This was meant for networking purposes among these people:

NAME	CLUB	PHONE NO.
Frank Ashenhurst	Itasca C.C.	630-773-1800, Ext. 141
Stephanie Batroni*	Hinsdale G.C.	630-986-1323
Laurel Kaiser	Ivanhoe Club	847-566-9257
Debby Kiple	Arboretum G. C.	847-913-0383
Michael Moriarity	The Village Links of Glen Ellyn	630-469-2077, Ext. 6
Alaine Rapp	The Golf Club at Oak Brook	630-323-7633

\* Stephanie would like to organize some sort of roundtable discussion, so give her a call.

Tom McDonald of Chevy Chase C.C. has moved into his new maintenance building, and it is quite nice. What a drastic and pleasant change from the old falling-down barn.

Floyd Norris is looking for a mechanic's position. Please call 630-985-6942.

Assistant needed. Flossmoor C.C. is looking for an assistant with 2 years in turfgrass study. Additional maintenance experience required. Contact Ray Schmitz, 708-798-2498.

Bill Aiston at Lake Shore C.C. is looking for an assistant. Spray operator's license and experience is important. 847-835-4303.

We all read about the bank holdup and shoot-out in Los Angeles in late February. Well, one of the police officers that was wounded was the grandson of Adolph Bertucci. Adolph reports that his grandson is okay with only a flesh wound and had only been on the police force for 6 months.

Assistant needed at Turnberry C.C., Crystal Lake, IL. Call Jim Evans at 815-459-8570.

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# Prairie Dropseed



When viewed up close prairie dropseed offers a pleasing aroma and appearance to the autumn landscape.

Tom Voigt  
Extension Turfgrass Specialist  
University of Illinois

If you are tempted to try your hand at growing some of our native Midwestern prairie plant species, but have concerns about where to begin, I have a great plant for you to try. It is one of the most attractive of the prairie natives and fits equally well into naturalized or managed settings, it's not invasive by seeds or stems, and it's tolerant of a wide variety of soil conditions. What is this delight? It's prairie dropseed, *Sporobolus heterolepis*, also known as northern dropseed or dropseed. It is a warm season perennial clump-forming grass. It naturally grew throughout northeastern Illinois in a variety of settings.

## Appearance

The most obvious reason for growing this plant is its refined appearance. It is usually less than 4 feet tall, including inflorescences; and its long, arching foliage resembles a fountain. The 20-inch long leaves emerge from

clumps that are 6 to 8 inches across at the base. The gray-green leaves are rolled inward and become golden brown to orange during the autumn. During winter they turn pale and bleached.

The flowers emerge, usually in August, on sturdy stems. These panicles are cone-shaped, 3 to 12 inches long, and 3 inches wide at the base. Initially a pale pink-brown, they mature to golden brown.

## Landscape Use

Prairie dropseed can be used in a variety of golf course settings. Certainly, it is a worthwhile inclusion in naturalized areas. Try to use it where it can be easily viewed by golfers; I have seen it nicely used within a turnaround of a cart path. It is also refined enough to be used in managed landscape settings as a large-scale ground cover, specimen plant, or mixed into a flower bed as an accent. It shows up well when planted in front of a dark background due to its attractive golden appearance in late summer and autumn.

## Environmental Adaptation

Prairie dropseed performs best in full sun; it tends to flop over in shaded areas. When established, it is quite heat and drought tolerant, perhaps due to its 3- to 5-foot deep root system. Although it tolerates a wide range of settings, from moist to dry prairies, its preferred growing sites are often well-drained upland areas. In these upland settings, it can form communities where it makes up the majority of the plant composition. Overall, it is generally a trouble-free plant after it has matured and becomes established.

## Growing and Propagation

Prairie dropseed tends to begin growing earlier in the spring than many other warm season grasses, but the foliage also stops growing earlier in the summer than other similar species. It seems to do best when transplanted in the spring. Also, it can be slow to mature, sometimes taking up to 4 years to attain full size from seed.

Propagation is by division or seed. Divide plants in spring for





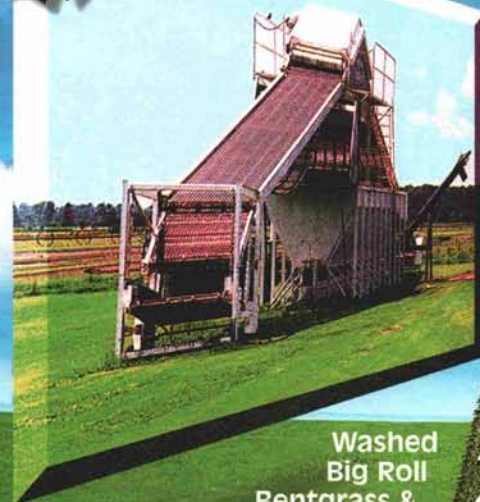
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best success. The seeds of prairie dropseed fall upon ripening, usually in September or October. If you wish to collect seeds from this plant, be sure to monitor their status in the autumn so as not to lose them before they disperse.

There are some differences in opinion about starting prairie dropseed from seed. Some authors report it to be easy to start from seed, while others indicate it to be difficult. In my experience, I have found it to be a difficult plant to start from seed, either in a controlled nursery bed setting or in a landscape setting. I recommend purchasing potted plants or plugs, at least for plantings of limited size. If you do wish to try to seed this plant, sow the seeds in the fall so that they receive stratification.

### Of Interest

There is a fragrance, aroma, or odor that emanates from this plant while it's flowering. Some say it smells of hot wax, while oth-

ers liken the aroma to burnt popcorn. Still others find it reminds them of crushed cilantro. Of additional interest is the report that the seeds are tasty. Moreover, the seeds were used to make flour in bygone times. In the wild, prairie

dropseed is good indicator of undisturbed prairie as it does not tolerate grazing or other soil disturbances. ■



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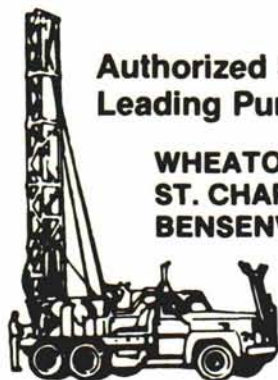
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