



ANNUAL BLUEGRASS (*Poa Annua* L.)

By STEVE BATTEN

Annual bluegrass is adapted to a wide range of soils and climates and is common worldwide. So much so, that it can be cultured as a turfgrass in the cool humid regions of the United States. It can easily be identified among warm season or overseeded grasses by its boat-shaped leaf tip. A vigorous seed producer, a mature unmowed plant can produce 360 seeds over a four month period. Potentially the soil surface could contain up to 30 million seeds/acre. Annual bluegrass is capable of producing seeds on open pyramidal panicles under low mowing heights of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 cm).

Annual bluegrass will not tolerate high amounts of soluble salts or low pH. Observations by researchers suggested that acid-forming fertilizers could be used for control (seedhead suppression). However, control has been more successful with applications of sulfur. Annual bluegrass is also highly susceptible to smog (ozone & sulfur dioxide) damage. It has even been used as a smog indicator plant in Los Angeles, California. Most common diseases and insect pests that affect cool season turfgrasses also affect annual bluegrass. Even with all these susceptibilities, annual bluegrass is still the most economically important winter weed on Florida golf courses.

Declination of the root system at soil temperatures above 80 to 85° F (30-32° C) allow bermudagrass to gain the upper advantage in the spring. With a lack of heat tolerance, it is good that annual bluegrass is only seasonal in Florida. ■

(illustration from *Turf Management for Golf Courses*, Fall 1982, by James Beard, published by Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, Minn., illustrated by Steve Batten)