



The eighth green at the Bay Hill Club has 100% *Poa Trivialis*

Instead of ryegrass – Overseeding with *poa trivialis*

This small seed size enables a superintendent to winter overseed a green without taking it out of play in the fall or altering the height during overseeding

Editor's Note: Dr. Richard Hurley, Director of Research and Agronomy for Loft Seed, Inc., is the developer of the successful *poa trivialis* variety, Laser. I ran into Dr. Hurley at the Nestle Invitational at Bay Hill last March. We were discussing the growing trend of *Poa trivialis* overseeding replacing ryegrass overseeding, and Dr. Hurley relayed his concerns over the ability of suppliers to meet the increasing demand for seed. He also wanted to alert superintendents to the possible use by some suppliers of uncertified European varieties of *Poa*

trivialis. With seed ordering season just around the corner, Dr. Hurley offered to do an article on current *poa trivialis* seeding techniques and alternatives.

BY DR. RICHARD HURLEY

Poa trivialis is commonly known by its scientific name, but is also referred to as rough bluegrass or rough-stalked bluegrass. *Poa trivialis* produces moderately fine-textured, medium-dense attractive turf that has recently become a very popular choice as a winter overseeding grass. It has the ability to germinate and grow at

low temperatures, displays good color retention in cool winter months, germinates rapidly with good seedling vigor, and has excellent winter hardiness.

With a small seed size that provides approximately 2,000,000 seeds per pound, *poa trivialis* has an 8-to-1 advantage in number seeds per pound compared to perennial ryegrasses. This small seed size enables a superintendent to winter overseed a green without taking it out of play in the fall or altering the height during overseeding. ➔



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As long as thatch has been kept under control a superintendent simply distributes the seed over the putting surface uniformly. This seed will germinate and mature into an impressive winter overseeding. One of the most significant factors that superintendents have learned is that after the initial fall application of *poa trivialis* it is easy to add additional seed to increase plant density. This factor alone allows a superintendent a second or third chance to reseed heavy wear areas or turfs that have developed insufficient stand density.

One common winter overseeding program is to apply 100% *poa trivialis* at the rate of 10-13 pounds/1,000 square feet to putting greens in the mid-fall and supplement with with an additional 2 pounds/1,000 square feet on a weekly basis in late December through the month of January. This program has been successfully used by Dwight Kummer and Jim Ellison at the Bay Hill Club in Orlando. The Bay Hill Lodge is very active in keeping the course full of golfers during the winter months with 250 or more golfers per day on weekdays and up to 350 on weekends. Additionally, Bay Hill hosts the Nestle Invitational PGA Tour stop in mid-March. In all, this adds to the challenge of providing an excellent putting surface for the pros.

Dwight and Jimmy have found that applying "supplemental light applications of Laser *poa trivialis* at 2 pounds/1,000 square feet weekly during January provides excellent density on the greens" for tournament preparation. Light frequent grooming of a *poa trivialis* overseeding in January, February, and March has been found to provide the most desirable, smoothest and truest putting surface for winter overseeding.

Throughout the southern states some superintendents are mixing bentgrass with *poa trivialis* for winter overseeding and reporting excellent results. Actually this combination will normally produce an 80% *poa trivialis* overseeding due to a slow establishment period for bentgrass. It is often said that greens are overseeded with bent when in reality *poa trivialis* is the grass providing the excellent performance.

Table 1

1. For a quality *Poa trivialis*, buy only Oregon certified blue tag seed.

For 1992 the only varieties eligible for Oregon seed certification are Laser, Sabre, and Colt. There have been reports that inferior European produced varieties (i.e. *Dasas*, *Ino*, or *Polis*) have been used as an unauthorized substitute in mixtures with subsequent mislabeling of seed tags.

2. *Poa trivialis* can be used for winter overseeding in the following ways:

| Recommended Seeding Rates in pounds/1,000 square feet | | | |
|---|-----------|-------|---------------|
| Grass Varieties | Greens | Tees | Fairways* |
| 100% <i>Poa trivialis</i> OR | 10-13** | 10-15 | 125-175 |
| 85% perennial ryegrass 15% <i>Poa trivialis</i> OR | 25-30 | 10-15 | 200-300 |
| 60% perennial ryegrass 25% Chewings Fescue 15% <i>Poa trivialis</i> OR | 25-30 | 10-15 | 200-300 |
| 60% <i>Poa trivialis</i> | 5-7N/R*** | N/R | 40% bentgrass |

All percentages are by seed weight.
***Fairway rates are in pounds per acre.**
**** Additional mid-winter touch-up seeding (2-3 times) at 2 pounds/1,000 square feet may be desirable.**
*****Not Recommended**

3. Don't consider purchasing the European varieties *Dasas*, *Ino*, or *Polis* at any cost. Possible *Poa annua* contamination and poor performance will result.

4. Touch-up reseeding or spot seeding with *Poa trivialis* can be an effective tool to improve damaged surfaces or thicken weak spots. Touch-up seeding at the rate of 2 pounds/1,000 square feet can be practiced anytime throughout the winter simply by depositing seed uniformly to the surface.

5. After establishing a *Poa trivialis* winter overseeding, light weekly "grooming" or brushing will help stand the plants upright and reduce grain.

6. If you are on a Rubigan *Poa annua* control program, provide a 30-plus day interval between the last Rubigan application and overseeding with *Poa trivialis*. On some heavy soils the interval should be extended to 40 plus days. Be sure to read the product label prior to Rubigan applications in conjunction with *Poa trivialis* winter overseedings. Contact your Dow Elanco representative for more information.

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