

News

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Ohio turf show: record crowd learns the latest in maintenance

Perennial ryegrasses, *Poa annua*, and sand topdressing were the hot topics in the golf course sessions at the Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show in Columbus last month, and these and other programs were received with great interest on the part of golf course superintendents attending.

The conference and show drew a record crowd of more than 1,500 superintendents and other turf managers — although Ohio Turfgrass Foundation executive secretary and show organizer David P. Martin told GOLF BUSINESS that it looked like there were more representatives from lawn care companies than from golf courses. This was the second year that the conference had separate sessions for golf course and lawn care.

Speaking during the opening afternoon program, Dr. J.R. Hall of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University gave an overview of "where we are today with regard to perennial ryegrasses" and outlined the strengths and



Dr. Hall

weaknesses of contemporary varieties.

"Drs. Reed Funk, Bill Meyer, and Joe Duich have made tremendous contributions in breeding perennial ryegrasses," Hall said, "and they have given professional turf managers some

capabilities with turfgrasses that we've never had before."

Strengths of perennial ryegrasses, according to Hall, include: medium texture; blend well with Kentucky bluegrass; fast germination rate enables establishment in difficult areas; good recuperative potential; withstand low mowing heights (lower as a group than Kentucky bluegrass); have an extended green season; tolerate short-term drought with good color; good seedling vigor. On golf courses, he said, perennial ryegrasses are especially good for overseeding into a "strong bluegrass base;" overseeding bermudagrass tees, fairways, and greens; and overseeding divots on creeping bent tees.

Weaknesses of perennial ryegrasses, according to Hall, include: disease susceptibility; color contrast; poor mowing quality (although "we're making a lot of progress on it"); slow lateral growth habit; lack winterhardiness (older strains); upright growth habit requires more mowing than bluegrass; not shade tolerant ("but neither are bluegrasses"). Except for the disease susceptibility, Hall said, these are mostly minor considerations.

Hall said in closing that superintendents "would be wise to purchase certified seed."

"If I were a superintendent," he said, "I would advise the people who were footing the bill that seed certification is important, especially with perennial ryegrasses."

Just 24 hours later, Dr. Bill Meyer himself stepped to the microphone and explained how perennial ryegrasses are grown — and certified — in Oregon's Willamette Valley. He also showed slides of the extensive turfgrass research facility he operates for Turf-Seed, Inc., and outlined just what goes into creating improved grass varieties. (For a good description of the process, see page 27 of this magazine.)

Meyer reinforced much of what Hall said in regard to the strengths and weaknesses of perennial



The Toro Co. unveiled its new all-hydraulic HTM-175 fairway mower at the Ohio Turfgrass Show. OTF Executive Secretary Dave Martin and 1978 President John Fitzgerald conferred behind the tractor.

ryegrasses. The consensus seems to be that new varieties are great improvements, and that even better varieties are in the offing.

Another type of grass was much discussed at the Ohio meeting, but not always in complimentary terms. The grass is *Poa annua*, and the question still is "Kill it or keep it?"

Paul Jacquemin discussed a test program conducted by his company, O.M. Scott & Sons, on the use of the herbicide Linuron to control *Poa annua* in bluegrass turf. In the past, this herbicide has been used primarily for selective weed control in agriculture, but it had been approved for short-term control of annual weeds in noncrop areas.

For golf course use, Scotts did 45 tests over a 10-state area in the northeastern United States and found that Linuron can be used to effectively control *Poa annua* — though with certain reservations. For instance, researchers found that Linuron should not be used on newly seeded Kentucky bluegrass until after the third mowing. Also, courses with heavy *Poa annua* populations could end up nearly bare for a period of time after Linuron is applied. "We want to mention," Jacquemin said, "that we don't consider Linuron to be the answer, especially on golf courses, but we see it as a tool that possibly could be used to help eliminate the

Poa annua problem."

A panel of three Ohio golf course superintendents told the audience what they do to keep *Poa annua*. Recommendations they made:

- Good drainage is essential.
- Syringing is critical, especially on very hot days.
- *Poa* will survive heat stress better in summer if hardened-in first in preceding weeks.

One panel member, Mark Yoder of Worthington Hills Country Club, gave this opinion: "Except for several weeks in the springtime, a well-maintained *Poa annua* golf course can offer excellent playing conditions. With sound management practices, *Poa* can be and has been successfully grown in our area."

Frank Bowman, superintendent of 54 holes of golf for the Springfield Municipal Golf Courses, reported some success in controlling annual bluegrass with tricalcium arsenate and with Linuron (as part of Scotts' testing program). He also felt that a good overseeding program was essential in controlling or living with *Poa*. Although Bowman has had to live with *Poa* and has developed a strong maintenance program for it, he ended his remarks by saying, "I certainly hope we will see the day when *Poa* can be eradicated."

Bill Burdick, superintendent of Canterbury Golf Club, a prestigious



Yoder and Bowman

Burdick

private club which has hosted seven major tournaments and will be the site of the U.S. Amateur in 1979, said, "We have chosen to use cultural practices to control *Poa* and live with the *Poa* that remains."

In the 7 years that Burdick's program has been in effect, he has reduced his fairway *Poa* population from 70 percent to 20 percent "with no visible loss of turf." Burdick

concurred with Yoder and Bowman on most practices, but added one recommendation: to let the club's members or golfing public know what the superintendent is doing, so they will understand when you start syringing on an afternoon when the course is covered with golfers.

Dr. Hall of Virginia appeared on the Ohio program a second time. As the last speaker on the last day,

his remarks served as a counterpoint to those of three superintendents who have been using sand topdressing on their greens with some success.

First Carl Schwartzkopf, regional director of the USGA Green Section, outlined "some current ideas on sand topdressing" to set the stage for the discussion that followed. Sand eliminates the problems of muddy greens after topdressing, he said, and it improves the cushion and resiliency of the greens, making them "hold" better on properly hit iron shots.

With sand topdressing, Schwartzkopf said, greens will not be too fast for the average golfer. For the benefit of the superintendent, sand topdressing can eliminate aeration, and it discourages *Poa annua*. Possible problems include localized dry spots, the possibility of water retention difficulties; and the need to adjust fertilization programs because of increased leaching.

Even though Schwartzkopf favors sand topdressing, he stated that "it is not a panacea — some greens will have to be rebuilt" and that once you start, you must keep doing it "infinitely."

The three superintendents on the panel — Gene Sylvester of Piqua Country Club, Jack Johns of Camargo Country Club, and Jim Loke of Firestone Country Club — reinforced Schwartzkopf's comments, based on their experience.



Schwartzkopf

Dr. Hall stressed Schwartzkopf's last point: that once sand topdressing is begun, it must be continued. Otherwise, he said, a layer effect is created which adversely affects distribution of water and nutrients through the green. Other superintendents and turf experts in attendance agreed with one side or the other, indicating that this is another turf

management question yet to be resolved.

Superintendents attending the Ohio Turfgrass Conference were able to accumulate up to 2 of the 5 hours needed for recertification of their pesticide applicators licenses. The program included Dr. John Hellman of the University of Maryland speaking on "biological and chemical control of grubs in turfgrasses" and Dr. Harry Niemczyk of Ohio State reporting on the *Ataenius* beetle and the discovery of a new, similar grub pest (see GOLF BUSINESS, Dec. 1978, p. 8).

New York presents broad program

Over 300 golf course superintendents and other turf managers attended the New York State Turfgrass Conference at the Turf Inn in Albany and were able to hear two dozen speakers on a broad variety of topics. The conference program was divided into eight sessions: management, insects and diseases, in-depth research reports, seed and renovation, sod, fertilizers, drainage, and weather topics.

The New York State Turfgrass Association honored Nassau County extension agent Bob O'Knefski with a certificate of merit "for many outstanding contributions to the turfgrass industry" and elected these officers for 1979:

President — Melvin Lucas Jr., CGCS, Garden City GC; vice president — Philip Mitchell, The Edison Club; secretary-treasurer — Ed Kabelac.

COMPANIES

Toro sells last of distributorships

The Toro Co., manufacturer of turf maintenance and irrigation equipment, recently sold its distributorships in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and White Plains, N.Y. The sales complete Toro's divestiture of company-owned distributorships.

Toro Pacific Distributing-Los Angeles has been sold to a new company headed by Dennis D. Schmid, former west coast sales manager for Dearborn Chemical Co., and Richard A. Danielson, former director of marketing services for Toro's Irrigation Division. It will be called Toro

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Pacific Distributing, Inc.

Toro Pacific Distributing-San Francisco has been purchased by Louis A. Rinaldi, former general manager of that distributorship, and Gene Warne, former general manager of the Los Angeles distributorship. Their company name will be Westoro Distributing Co.

Toro Distributing-New York has been sold to Hartley D. Bingham, president of Elmco Distributors, Inc. Bernard Wollin, former general manager of the distributorship, has joined Elmco as a vice president and director.

All three companies will handle allied products of other manufacturers in addition to Toro.

TURFGRASS

NGF conducts survey of turf species use

Sixty percent of the respondents in a recent nationwide survey conducted by the National Golf Foundation rated Pennncross bentgrass "superior" for use on

| NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION BOX SCORE | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------|
| January-December 1978 | | REGULATION COURSES | EXECUTIVE COURSES | PAR 3 COURSES | TOTAL |
| OPENED FOR PLAY | New | 50 | 14 | 4 | 126 |
| | Additions | 49 | 9 | 0 | |
| STARTED CONSTRUCTION | New | 46 | 5 | 2 | 92 |
| | Additions | 35 | 2 | 2 | |
| PROSPECTIVE | | 100 | 10 | 6 | 116 |

putting surfaces.

Survey responses were received from 1,623 golf facilities representing a cross-section by type, size of course, and geographic location, according to NGF Director of Research Ed Wells. An analysis of the results reveals the following highlights:

- Bluegrass was the most frequently used species on tees (reported by 32 percent of the respondents), fairways (52 percent), and roughs (53 percent). Bentgrass had the second highest frequency of use on tees (26 percent), while bermudagrass was second on fairways (23 percent)

and roughs (19 percent). On greens, bentgrass was used most often (by 79 percent of the courses responding), followed by bermuda (15 percent). Climate was given as the leading factor in influencing selection of grasses.

- Sixty percent of the respondents rated Pennncross bentgrass "superior" and 26 percent "very good" for use on greens. The next highest rating was attained by the Seaside variety, which was rated superior by 8 percent of the respondents and very good by 24 percent.

- Sixty percent of the courses reported annual budgets for grass

seed of \$1,000 or under. The median figure was \$833, while the average was \$1,485.

- Fifty percent of the respondents overseed tees on an annual basis; 39 percent overseed greens annually; 31 percent, fairways; and 8 percent, roughs. The average amount spent per pound for bentgrass for overseeding was \$5.19.

- Manhattan was selected as the top preference of perennial ryegrasses (by 48 percent) out of 10 popular varieties listed.

- Expanded green renovation for next year was planned by 27 percent of the facilities.

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