



# O. J. NOER RESEARCH FOUNDATION: THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

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Research Director



Sketch by Gene Haas

The O. J. Noer Research Foundation was initiated in 1959 by associates and friends of O. J. Noer. Its purpose then was and now is to honor North America's most widely known, respected and beloved turfgrass agronomist. His lifetime's work was the improvement of turfgrasses and there was no more appropriate or significant way to honor his memory than through a research foundation based on the same objectives and goals he carried throughout his life.

The Foundation is dedicated to the generation of original research through grants to universities and experiment stations. Most of these projects, since they are basic in nature, would have no "commercial" support. But because of the nature of basic research the information generated will always have value over a broad range of interests. Much of the data generated has no immediate, direct effect on turfgrass manage-

ment since it is so fundamental in nature. It does, however, for a base from which more practical projects can be developed. Dr. Jim Beard calls this the "fallout" effect". If basic facts have been developed, a great deal of time, money and effort have been saved to do other things.

An example of this fallout effect can be illustrated by thatch studies funded by the Foundation over the years. The Foundation established grants at Michigan State and Texas A & M in recent years to concurrently study identification, cause and effect, and control of thatch on cool and warm season grasses. Since those projects, which were basic in nature, there have been many projects on thatch dealing with subjects like insecticide effects, disease generation, etc., all based on data accumulated by those initial projects.

Noer was a native of Stoughton and graduated from the University of Wisconsin — Madison with a degree in Soil Science. He did graduate work at the UW Soil Science Department and that work resulted in the production and marketing of Milorganite. It seems most appropriate, in context of his background, that the very first project funded by the Noer Foundation was at the University of Wisconsin and conducted by Dr. James R. Love. Love's work was the first time anyone had shown visible nutrient deficiency symptoms in turfgrass. The paper by Love and the photographs are classics in the field.

Most of the monies contributed to the Foundation comes from Milorganite distributors, who have a self-assessed fee on tonnage sold each year. Golf Course Superintendents Associations from across the country also make gifts, along with interested individuals and companies like Jacobsen and Toro. The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association has been one of the major contributors to the Noer Foundation since its beginning. It has donated over \$12,000 in two ways. One has been through a matching funds program with the Milorganite Division of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. Any gift to the Foundation from the WGCSA is matched with an equal amount of money from

MMSD. The other is the assignment of most of the excess funds received at the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium.

Noer grants have been made toward worthwhile projects in all sections of the country, from New Jersey to California and from Florida to Washington. Below are locations of research projects supported by the Noer Research Foundation:

California	
Florida	3
Illinois	2
Iowa	4
Massachusetts	
Michigan	3
Minnesota	
Nebraska	
New Jersey	
New Mexico	
Ohio	
Pennsylvania	3
Texas	4
Washington	
Wisconsin	5

In addition to the nutrient deficiency symptom study and the projects on thatch, the Foundation has funded the study of fertilization effects on turf diseases, cutting height and root growth relationships, nutritional influence on dollarspot, fertility problems on sandy soils, special soil testing techniques required by turfgrass areas, herbicidal effects on turf diseases, fertility levels in *Poa annua* control and the development of new grass varieties requiring less water and fertilizer. Added to this array of research work and projects dealing with water management in relation to heat and drought stress, nitrogen-fixing organisms for cool season grasses, and microscopic time lapse photographic studies of root nematodes. And this list is not a complete accounting of the topics of research work supported by the Foundation over the years. There are some exciting projects now underway. Cal-Poly is working on studies with *Zoysia* cultivars in the southwest involving establishment, adaptation and water use, and iron efficiency. U. of Florida — Ft. Lauderdale is completing an evaluation of turf-type bermuda grasses for sod webworm resistance. Dr. Clint Hodges is finishing a study on the mode of action of leafspot development related to light, and herbicide



effects on leaf physiology, both projects at Iowa State. Dr. Joe Vargas, Honorary Member of the WGCSA, is completing the development of procedures to enable the prediction of plant disease occurrence. And the University of Massachusetts has started a project to investigate the extent of gaseous nitrogen losses from turf due to denitrification.

The Noer Research Foundation has also given monies to support graduate students and through 1983, twelve advanced degrees had been gained through the Foundation's help. These efforts help assure the turfgrass industry a continuing source of turfgrass specialists for all facets of the industry.

The Foundation is also involved with helping library collections that are important to the turfgrass business. Libraries at Michigan State University and at Texas A & M receive support in the establishment of and book acquisition for their turfgrass collections.

Noer Foundation grants are made from investment profits. Thus, any donations made to the Foundation continue to bring dividends from that time forward. In addition, there are no paid employees and the result is an absolute minimum in overhead. Management costs usually run two percent or less. Officers and Directors receive no pay, no transportation or living expenses at meetings. They serve because of their remembrance of O. J. Noer and their commitment to the field from which their livelihood comes. That's how the Foundation has generated \$220,000 for turfgrass research in the first twenty-five years of its existence. The outlook for the future is even brighter and the next twenty-five years for the Foundation will bring great and valuable advancements in the turfgrass industry.

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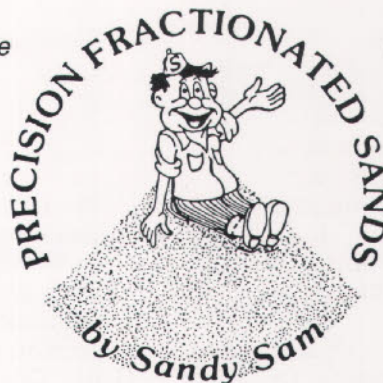
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