

# 1993 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium

## "Getting Right With God"

By Monroe S. Miller

The 1993 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium attacked a subject that was of particular interest around the state in 1993—winter injury of golf turf.

The same subject was covered in 1966, the first year of the Symposium. MMSD produced a bulletin as a result of that meeting that has become a classic in turf literature.

Anyone who attended that meeting or who has read the resulting bulletin could only conclude one thing after the 1993 meeting—we haven't come that far in either knowledge or research on this complex subject.

The Symposium was a good review of what is known about winter injury. Those who were waiting for the magic formula or a silver bullet to use against the worst of all turf dilemmas went away frustrated.

There still aren't any concrete answers.

Dr. Frank Rossi continued a tradition of really excellent keynote speakers. He spoke in broad strokes, laying a foundation that the other speakers would build on with their lectures. Interestingly, Frank was only four years old when the topic was first approached in 1966! Throughout his presentation, which was accompanied by an excellent selection of slides, were really good pieces of advice.

Dr. Peter Landschoot came to Milwaukee from Penn State where is a faculty member in the turfgrass program. Pete reviewed the literature, which is also scant, relating to winter injury and fertility practices. He found much work had been done on other crops and he also uncovered discrepancies between accepted practices and research results.

Dr. Drew Smith has been positioned to deal with what are likely the most severe winter conditions for turf in North America. His experience in Canada with injury, especially gray snowmold, served as a good reference point for those of us in a southern climate like Wisconsin!

Jim Brooks, director of The Lawn Institute, returned to Milwaukee to address the Symposium for the second time, both as the luncheon speaker. No one in our business can place too much emphasis on communication, and Brooks'

message included a plea to speak plain English and to speak your client's language.

The man who has been "in the news" of late on the subject of winter injury to turf was a speaker at this year's Symposium. Dr. John Roberts from the University of New Hampshire has put emphasis on winter injury like no other investigator since Dr. Jim Beard's work while he was working at Michigan State. Roberts spoke to the issue of injury causes, detailed various practices now used to reduce injury incidence, and shared some of the research he is now doing.

Few can match the experience of a Green Section Agronomist, and an experienced Green Section Agronomist is a real pleasure to listen to. Bob Vavrek qualifies as that, and his lecture on winter injury was filled with practical advice and observations. He focused on green covers and how they have worked in the Great Lakes Region.

Dr. Randy Kane made an excellent presentation of cool season turfgrass diseases and the patch diseases. His field experience was gained from Chicago area golf courses. As usual, he did a great job in covering the material in an easy to understand way.

There is some fear among some golf course superintendents that snowmold will be even more of a problem once the mercury compounds are no longer available for use. Tom Charnock, a golf course superintendent from the Buffalo, New York area, has many years of experience in controlling snowmold without mercurial compounds. His advice was reassuring.

As has been done for many years, Jim Latham, our Green Section Director, wrapped up the Symposium with a summary of the subject material presented. This savvy GODFATHER OF THE SYMPOSIUM, in an attempt to put it in one line, wrote the title of these notes!

Thanks to the Symposium Committee, the MMSD staff and the Session Chairmen for planning and executing the largest such event in 28 years. 🌿



Head table guests Johnson, Vavrek, Ward and Nees.



Questions and answers: (Left to Right) Kuta, Rossi, Smith, Roberts, Landschoot, Kane.



New WGCSA Distinguished Service Award winner Rod Johnson.



The Hyatt - Milwaukee, new home of the Symposium.



Ring out the old and bring in the new—presidents Semler and Worzella.



Brooks and Latham at lunch.

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