



Four Great -ber Months!

By Monroe S. Miller

The last four months of 1997—the -ber months (you know: SeptemBER, OctoBER, NovemBER, and DecemBER) have been wonderful ones for most of us in Wisconsin, even those not entrusted with the welfare of a golf course.

September was warmer, warmer than August even, and dry; it was exceptional for golf players and those among us involved in course projects that required moving soil and/or seeding. October and November were sort of reversed, somewhat like August and September were. It was fortunate there were good outside working days in November, especially later in the month. The foliage crop on trees in 1997 was not only larger than normal, but it was late in falling. On our course, oaks dominate the landscape and they are last to fall every year. We worked on this routine task into December.

As we live our lives in the great state of Wisconsin, successful seasons by the Badgers and the Packers made most of us happy. The whuppin' the Packers gave the Dallas team in Great Bay was one of the five best games I've attended, even though my feet are still cold. "The 'boys went down in Tittletown!" was a phrase oft repeated by the legions who love the green and gold. The following week saw them pound the Vikings into the Metrodome "turf", also an exciting win. The Badgers made it to a bowl game, again, an accomplishment that is getting to be a good habit.

These months have great holidays—Labor Day and the end of the busiest days of golf, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. And, finally, we can enjoy some holidays with our families instead of at work.

The autumn of 1997 will be remembered by me as the time of our best Symposium ever. That was pleasure in the extreme, experiencing learning in a totally absorbing and interesting way.

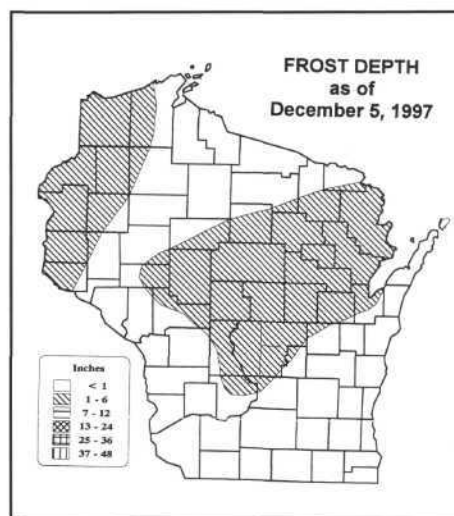
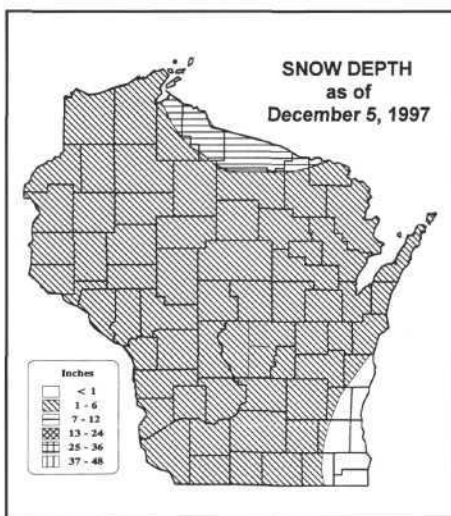
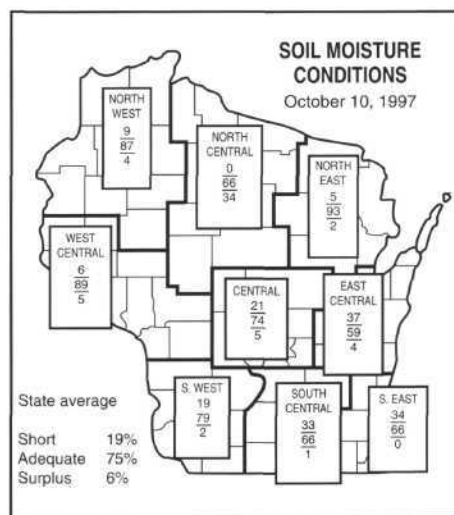
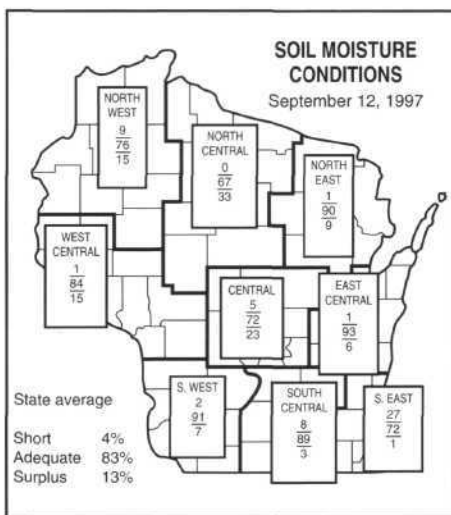
On a personal note, I enjoyed this season because it was my 25th, with the same employer even. The players at our Club helped me celebrate it in a really wonderful and classy way. I won't soon forget that Sunday.

And now we are at the threshold of another year in golf course management in Wisconsin. Will it be a good year, fulfilling and rewarding? Or will El Nino bring havoc to our weather and our season, bringing drought or disease epidemics? Time will tell.

Anyway, as we close the records on 1997, here are the final weather

statistics from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service for your perusal. I hope it was a good one and that next year will be your (and my) best ever. Happy New Year!

Did you catch the October issue of *Golf Digest*? The Ryder Cup was played at the Valderrama course in Spain, a course designed by Robert Trent Jones. He has done a couple of courses in Wisconsin—one on the Apostle Islands and, of course, The Springs near the Wisconsin River and close to Spring Green. Did you



ever wonder why he chose to do this course? Nick Seitz wrote this: "(Jones) liked the sonorous ring of Frank Lloyd Wright's full name and even Wright's egocentric outlook, once calling himself *The Frank Lloyd Wright of golf architecture...*"

Lawyers sometimes get a bad rap in our country and judging from the ones I know, it is often undeserved. But every once in awhile one lives up (down?) to the stereotype. Take for example the guy (an attorney) from Wausau who was able to patent a putting stroke!

Patent No. 5,616,089 was issued to protect this attorney's dominant *hand putting method*. The technique involves using the putter with one hand and using your other hand to brace your arm. He claims it took five strokes off his handicap.

He admits it will be all but impossible to collect royalties, but instead he hopes to develop a golf instructional video and sell it to recoup his expenses from the patent process.

Appropriately enough, the patent was issued on April Fool's Day this year. More aggravating to me that the silliness of this person's patent application is the time wasted by public employees—overpaid bureaucrats, no doubt—in reviewing such foolishness. It is a classic example of the sort of stupidity that leads to so much cynicism about our government and those who work for it.

The Turfgrass Information Center is now on the World Wide Web. You can visit their homepage at <http://www.lib.mus.edu/tgif>.

When most golf course superintendents talk about seed production, they are usually thinking about seed farms in Washington state or Oregon. If the superintendent of the UW Agricultural Research Station at Ashland and the owner of Deer Creek Seed, Inc. have anything to say about it, that perception may change.

Bill Leakey, owner of Deer Creek Seed, and Mike Mlynarek, superintendent of the Ashland ARS, think northern Wisconsin has the potential to produce significant quantities of quality seed. "This is grass country," Leakey said while explaining what an excellent alternative seed production would be for farmers in the northern part of our state. It would fit in nicely as a crop rotation component, too.

The Ashland station started out with seven different grasses to see which could be grown there. All seven made a crop, but perennial ryegrass was selected for more testing because it had the greatest potential for success. From these test plots demonstration fields were designed, and they were followed by limited production fields. In 1996, 198 acres of turf seed were sown; this year the acreage grew to 235. In 1999, it is anticipated 451 acres will be grown, and Leakey's goal is to have 2000 acres planted in the year 2000.

Yields of cleaned seed this season were about 700 pounds per acre. Both men believe that with good management yields of 1,200 to 1,500 pounds of seed per acre are attainable.

Anytime Wisconsin agriculture has another crop choice, the benefit is great. When that crop choice is one Wisconsin golf course superintendents could possibly use, we benefit directly. It is going to be an interesting process to watch unfold.



Stress detection glasses use aircraft and satellite technology to evaluate the health of plants. When drought, disease or some other pest cause stress to plants, it can be more easily detected through these glasses.

Most golf course superintendents have what I've called for years "a calibrated eyeball." We are able to look at a grass area and intuitively or instinctively know that something is wrong and know what that something is. Our eyes may soon get some help.

Stress detection glasses are now available that will help us pinpoint plant stress in the sea of green that is a fairway or a tee or a golf green. These glasses can help detect stress caused by drought or pests or disease. The purple lenses in plant stress detection glasses were developed by NASA so that aircraft pilots could evaluate ground vegetation. This is another spin-off from the space program research.

The lenses serve as "passive chlorophyll detectors" which filter out certain light wavelengths. They allow a viewer to see through the green and spot problems lost in that sea of green.

The glasses can be used not only for grass but any green crop. They sell for what seems to me to be a reasonable \$80.

Since I am on the subject of high technology, the U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that Wisconsin ranks No. 1 in the country for high-tech jobs per capita. Stated another way, per capita more people in Wisconsin are working in high technology jobs than any other state. Yes, including California and its Silicon Valley and Massachusetts with its Route 228 outside of Boston. You could argue that we are both the Dairy State and the Technology State!

It is a good sign, too, because that is the way our national economy is
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moving. Wisconsin has 9,980 technology employees per 100,000 citizens; second ranked Massachusetts has 5,710 high tech jobs per 100,000 citizens and California has less than half what we have.

Once again, thanks to the University of Wisconsin. It acts as a magnet for high technology companies and offers intellectual resources for those companies. Basic research drives new technology and that is what the UW does as well as any other institution in the world. For taxpayers, this is visible evidence of how our tax dollars for education are paying off. It is also evidence that The Wisconsin Idea really works!

I saw similar lists to these a number of years ago, and if my memory serves me correctly, I also printed them in *The Grass Roots*. Below are updates of the top discipline problems in public schools in the 1940s and in the 1990s.

1940s Problems 1990s Problems

Talking	Assault
Chewing gum	Drug abuse
Making noise	Alcohol abuse
Running in the halls	Gang warfare
Getting out of turn in line	Robbery
Wearing improper clothes	Rape
Not putting paper in wastebaskets	Suicide
	Arson
	Pregnancy
	Venereal disease

Things have changed a lot—for the worse.

The Pesticide Application Training Schedule for 1998 is out, and the Ornamental and Turf (3) category sessions are as follows:

Milwaukee	March 5	Feb. 20
Chippewa Falls	March 10	Feb. 24
Green Bay	March 11	Feb. 25
Arlington	March 25	March 11
Milwaukee	March 26	March 12

If you have questions about how to register, call
Rose Scott
Program Assistant
608-262-7588
rmscott@facstaff.wisc.edu

Here is another example of the uphill battle people like golf course superintendents seem to be engaged in all too often. It is a news item forwarded to me by Mike Lee of Blackwolf Run.

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26. He was attempting to show how conditioned we have become to alarmists practicing junk science and spreading fear of everything in our environment. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." And for plenty of good reasons, since it can

- 1. cause excessive sweating and vomiting*
- 2. it is a major component in acid rain*
- 3. it can cause severe burns in its gaseous state*
- 4. accidental inhalation can kill you*
- 5. it contributes to erosion*
- 6. it decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes*
- 7. it has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients*

He asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided, and only one knew that the chemical was water. The title of his prize winning project was "How Gullible Are We?" The conclusion is obvious.

El Nino—the abnormal heating of the southern Pacific Ocean off the coast of South America—has affected winter weather in Wisconsin in years past and National Weather Service meteorologists say it will again this winter.

El Nino winters have more precipitation and more of it comes in the form of drizzle, slushy freezing rain and thawing days. The six strongest El Nino winters on record, when averaged together, gave weather in our town 3.9 degrees warmer, had 8.4 inches less snow and received 0.67 inches more precipitation.

When it is distilled down, I'll still believe it when I see it. My preference is always for a winter with lots of snow that falls in early December and leaves for good in mid-March.

EXPO is around the corner. I've seen the program and it looks very, very good. I hope to see all of you there. 🙌



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