



Year in Review

By **Tom Schwab**, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Annually I like to think back on all the accomplishments and events that occurred at the Noer Facility over the past year. It's a good way to document and reminisce for a historical perspective and to help make plans for next season. There are weather occurrences, pest activities, facility improvements, a variety of events, and support from the industry to reflect on. All things considered, 2000 was a great year, except...

Except for the record rainfall this spring which piled record rainfall upon record rainfall. From May

15th to June 14th the Noer facility received 15.37 inches. Several new studies were washed out, reseeded, then washed out again. The researchers were not very happy, to say the least. Several times the surface drainageway, that runs adjacent to the facility, became a raging river. At its worst it reached 500-feet wide and brought tons of corn stubble from farms and silt from urban sprawl to settle on the facility. Several research plots, demonstrations, and a cart path needed rebuilding after that one. We have stunning pictures of the

orange sunset over this temporary "Lake Noer."

Otherwise the year started out on a pretty good note. We finally got a new pump and well to adequately serve the facility. The pumping capacity and pressure more than doubled what had previously been supplied. The new pumping pressure, as expected, blew out every remaining valve that wasn't previously replaced on the facility. But that was a small price to pay for the better pumping system. At least I think so. I don't know if my crew (who spent



Sunset over 'Lake Noer'.



Drilling the new well.



Some of the equipment that industry donates to the facility annually.

a majority of the summer digging holes, gluing pipe, and replacing valves) would agree. Now all 106 research plots have commercial grade valves and the new pump serving them. The irrigation package was completed when Reinders gave us a deal on irrigation components and tools, Watertronics discounted a variable speed drive and control package, Toro donated their national support network, several golf courses donated PVC pipe, and Liebold Irrigation donated a field satellite. We are thankful for all this industry support.

Other reasons to be thankful in 2000 are for all the continued support of so many others from Wisconsin's turf industry. We wouldn't be here and your turf studies couldn't be maintained without equipment donations from John Deere-Horicon, Wisconsin Turf Equipment, Reinders, Horst, J.W. Turf Equipment, National, Turfco, and Club Car. There are many others that donate items that help us operate. Spring Valley donated all the fertilizer used on the facility this year. Syngenta and United Horticulture Service donated chemicals. Greensmix helped with deals on topdressing. Ray Shane donated a year's use of a Club Car utility vehicle. Dan Williams gave Noer a new table

saw, which got lots of use. And those donations are just the ones I know about. I'm sure there are many others that donated impor-

tant paraphernalia to the researchers so that their research could be carried out.

And lots of research there was!



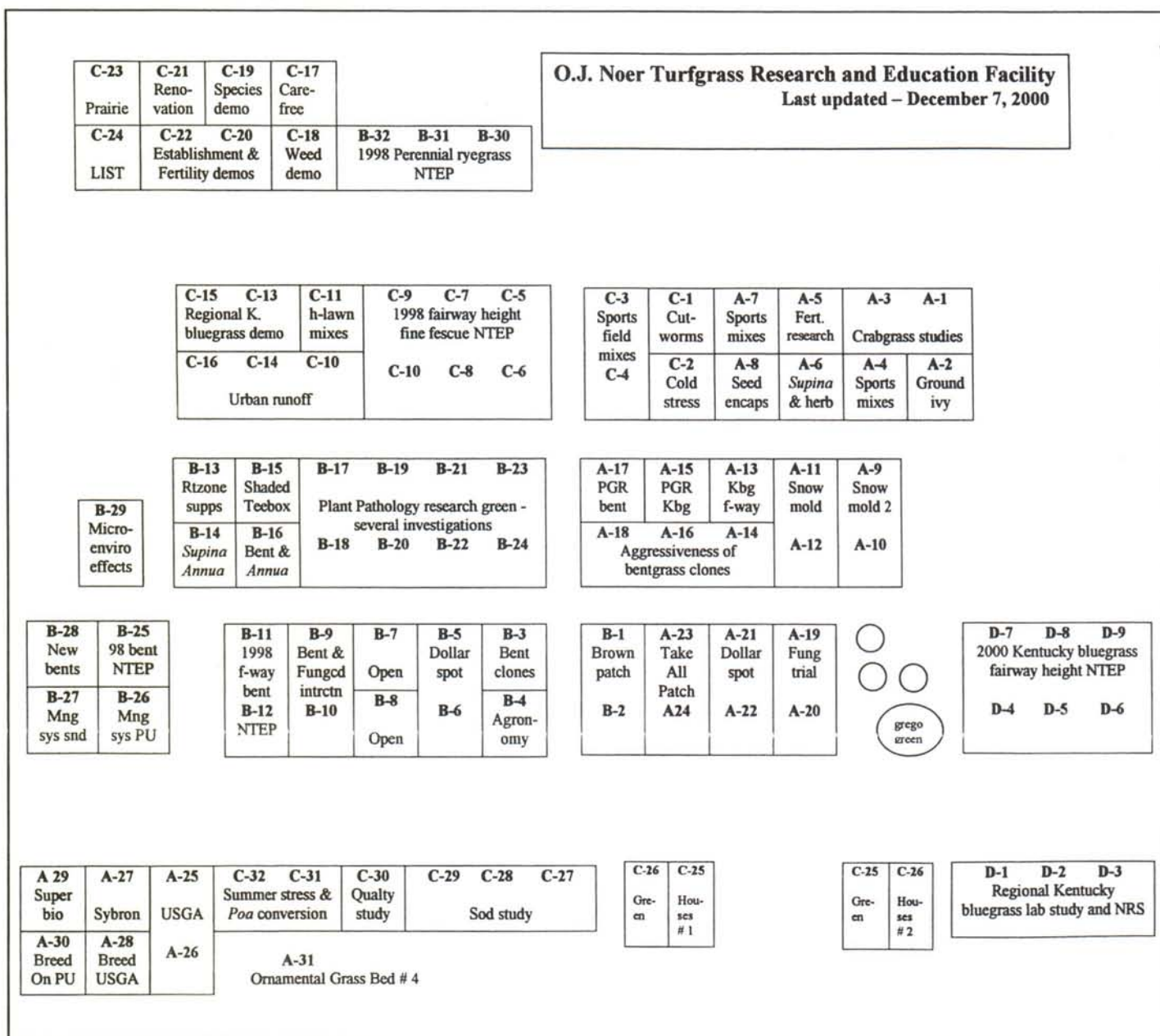
All but two of our plots had research on them this summer. Approximately 65 different investigations were occurring. Activity was frantic at times. Eleven new irrigated plots were constructed to make room for more studies. Twenty-one others were stripped off either because of damage from the flood or to install a new study where one had been completed. This brought the number of irrigated plots to 106. I'm always amazed

with how large a pile of sod and other waste accumulates in our work area in one year! A map of all the research activity that occurs at Noer is pictured here. Remember that this is just part of the turf investigations that the University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers are doing in the state. They have many projects occurring outside of the Noer facility also.

You may have visited much of this research during the annual

summer field day. By all accounts that day was a resounding success due to the energetic efforts of all 20 or so faculty, grad students, and other staff working out of the facility. Another event that was a great success, organized through the facility, was the WTA fundraising tournament at the Irish Course at Whistling Straits this past October. This event raised more than \$15,000 for the Wisconsin Distinguished Fellowship in

Plot map of all the Noer facility research.

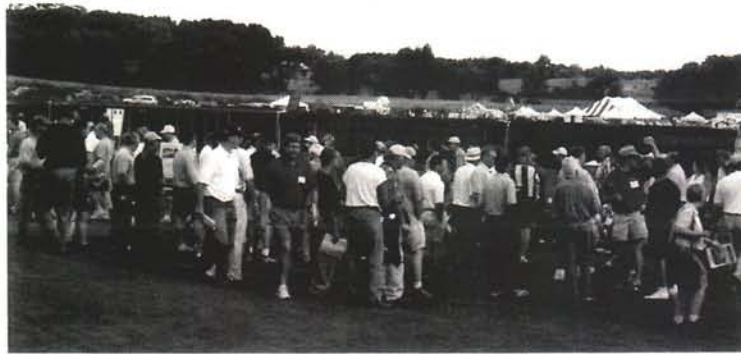


Turfgrass Research program. Lots of planning and work showed in those two events. That is why we are already making plans for next year's field day, homeowner turf day, and fundraising tournament.

There were many other changes made in addition to the ones already mentioned. Our shop area became less cramped when we moved all the fertilizers stored there to a storage building that we salvaged from Arlington Ag Research Station. A new Kentucky bluegrass sod nursery and two more display gardens were established. And the cart path was extended to better serve the remote plots and field day trade show area. The interior of the facility also saw some remodeling and reorganizing.

These changes combined to mean big improvements for the Noer facility. But we're not out of the woods yet. We have lots of other changes on the drawing board. Within two years we hope to double our land size. This expansion is needed to provide plot space for the five ambitious professors and other researchers working out of the facility. Three of the professors are new to the University, or at least to turf, in the last couple years. They'll need additional plot space to carry out their programs. The additional land will call for more parking, storage, lab space, and other needs. Also we may need to put up a fence soon to protect us from the extensive urbanization going on around the facility. You won't recognize the Noer facility the next time you see it with all the surrounding homes.

It's not only the surrounding area that's growing. You can see from my notes that the Noer facility and its programs are growing by leaps and bounds also. That all makes looking back at a 'year in review' a memory of a year to be proud of. ♣



Another successful WTA summer field day for 2000.

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