

I would like to expand the curriculum by adding a few courses such as; Turfgrass Pest Management (team taught by myself, Julie, and Chuck), turfgrass seminars (helping the students prepare presentations), a Turf Environmental Management class (a decision making course where students have to make management decisions with a focus on environmental issues), and a graduate level Turfgrass Physiology class.

**GR:** *Wisconsin has only a four-year program (one of the largest, at that). What are your feelings on 2-year vs. 4-year programs?*

**FR:** I am the product of a 2-year program and believe in the concept of an intense technical education. However, I am also the product of a 4-year program and believe in the concept of a more in-depth, well-rounded education. Each program serves specific needs and neither one is complete without a commitment to continuing education once you have completed a formal education. Our industry is changing so fast and becoming technically demanding to the point where to stay competent one must pursue advanced education.

**GR:** *Do you see any need to expand the Wisconsin program and offer the industry more grads? Are you concerned at all about job availability in the near future?*

**FR:** I believe the program and the number of grads should expand as we as a group believes it ought to. I do believe that we will continue to need new graduates particularly at the BS and MS level with the increased amount of technical expertise required for environmental compliance.

**GR:** *What kind of research and demonstration work do you expect to be doing at the NOER facility? What will be the focus of your overall research program?*

**FR:** I would like to have a broad based research program which addresses some current concerns of the industry from an applied perspective. Additionally, I want to explore some particular topics such as turfgrass response to weed competition, moisture stress, and growth regulators from a more basic scientific perspective. I look forward to collaborating with Wayne on Turf Soil Management Studies and developing forecasts for

pest problems based on growing degree days, especially soil degree days. Possibly I would like to investigate developing native grasses for potential turfgrass breeding efforts. One thing for sure is that I am rarely short on ideas or opinions.

**GR:** *How do you see yourself "fitting" with the WGCSA and the WTA? What kind of support do you hope for and expect from each group? How will you interact with Wisconsin golf course superintendents?*

**FR:** I think I might have addressed this question already, but if not, I see myself fitting right in with ALL the industry groups, not just golf. As I mentioned earlier I am rarely short on ideas and will feel free to share them. After all, the job description did say "aggressive individual". I have worked in the industry all my life and know how to grow grass. Additionally, I know that there is more to this business than growing grass; personnel management, mechanical expertise, irrigation specialist, environmental compliance, public relations, etc. Part of me will always be a golf course manager.

*(Continued on page 23)*

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(Continued from page 21)

**GR:** What are you going to call your feature that will appear in each issue of THE GRASS ROOTS? Have you selected the topic for your first one?

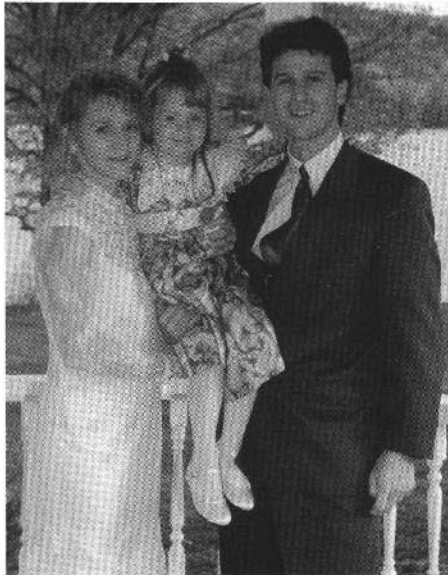
**FR:** I will wait to decide on a title for my GRASS ROOTS column and my first topic until after I've been around the state and met you all.

**GR:** Like it or not, Wisconsin is a very liberal state and many of us are anxious to learn of your background in dealing with legislation and legislators which affect our industry. Where do you see the pesticide laws heading?

**FR:** The liberal ideology has always felt most comfortable to me because I believe it is more tolerant of diversity than the other political views. However, I firmly believe, in general as a society we need less, not more laws. This is particularly true with the pesticide issues. Whether we like it or not, pesticide use for turf will continue to be scrutinized. In Michigan I have tried to work on 2 fronts; 1) helping legislators and the public to put the risk of pesticides in perspective and 2) teaching IPM principles to the industry to reduce reliance on pesticides. I want to continue the same type of approach and add golf club membership environmental education, so that our golfers have a clear understanding of the environmental pressures their superintendents are under.

**GR:** Do you view *P. annua* as a permanent and quality golf turf? (If you don't, you will!) Do you have any special insights into its management?

**FR:** I believe that there may not be a finer surface to play golf on than *Poa annua*, lest velvet bentgrass. I also recognize that ecologically our turfgrass environments favor the competitive advantage of *Poa*. Still, I am troubled. Troubled because many turfgrass managers still can't decide on an effective and consistent management strategy for *Poa* which is not input intensive. Troubled because we know it likes its N and we know it requires irrigation of the soil above field capacity which increases the likelihood for off-site movement of inputs. My experiences growing *Poa* and bent have led me to conclude that no one grass is the entire answer, I believe it is our ability to manage and cooperate with the total environment—soil, air, water, and plant material. I still believe that the understanding of the soil remains the big-



Barbara, Danielle and Frank Rossi.

gest "black box" in our profession—not the computer.

**GR:** Give us a quick "byte" of your impressions of the following: Madison, the UW campus, Wayne Kussow, Chuck Koval, Tom Salaiz, The Grass Roots.

**FR:** Impressions:

Madison—similar to Ithaca, NY, all the amenities of a city with a small town feel. Love the lakes !!

UW Campus—reminds me of the Cornell campus, very impressed with the mix of old and new architecture. Parking stinks !

Wayne Kussow—have met only briefly on a few occasions, have read his research and believe him to be a keen scientist as well as a sincere and gentle man.

Chuck Koval—met for the first time last week, personable and dynamic. He seems like a mover and shaker type.

Tom Salaiz—we think alike and our visions of the UW program are similar, enjoy his enthusiasm and see him as the "glue" of the program.

*The Grass Roots*—top quality publication. Read the last 2 years of issues prior to the interview, can tell much of Monroe's heart and soul are invested, can foresee many lively discussions ahead with Monroe regarding his opinions—seems he's not short on them either.

**GR:** Do you expect to be at the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Field Day in late August?

**FR:** I will be at Field Day!

**GR:** Finally, Rod Johnson is dying to find out if you play golf. Do you? How often? How well? CAUTION: I think he's hoping to lighten your wallet very early on!

**FR:** Remember, I came into this business through the maintenance shed, not the pro-shop. I am about a 20 and am still playing with a 1960 set of Walter Hagen's my Dad handed me down.

No bets, Rod!

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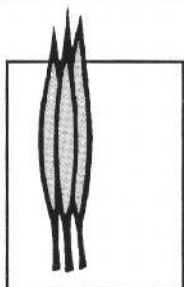
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# BUFFALOGRASS?

By Tom Salaiz

Yes, buffalograss! Well, O.K....maybe buffalograss. What am I talking about? I'm talking about the adaptation of buffalograss to southern Wisconsin. Maybe buffalograss will survive in Wisconsin's environment, maybe it won't.

Buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*) is a low maintenance, warm season turfgrass species native to the North American great plains. A fine textured, sod forming grass, buffalograss spreads by seed and stolons (Figure 1). The numerous stolons take root at the nodes to produce new plants. Buffalograss is dioecious with the male and female flowers occurring on separate plants. Pollen producing male flowers occur at the end of stems which stand 3-8 inches above the leaves. A matter of taste, this characteristic is considered attractive by some. Female plants produce burr-like inflorescences partially hidden in the turfgrass canopy. Each burr may contain one or more seeds.

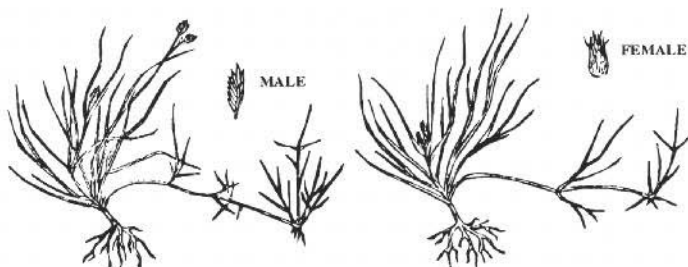


Figure 1. Male and female buffalograss plants spread by numerous stolons which take root and produce new plants at the nodes.

Source: deShazer, S.A., T.P. Riordan, F.P. Baxendale, and R.E. Gaussoin. 1992.

*Buffalograss: A warm-season native grass for turf. Nebraska Cooperative Extension EC92-1285-C*

Buffalograss may be established by seed, vegetative plugs (Figure 2), or sodding. Buffalograss seed is sold still in the burr, therefore, it is necessary to use pre-treated seed since the hydrophobic burr can prevent or delay germination. Establishment with vegetative plugs or sod may decrease the time required to obtain a full stand. Although it is a low maintenance grass, buffalograss still requires adequate irrigation during establishment.

One of the drawbacks of buffalograss is its relatively short growing season. Based on work at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, buffalograss begins growth in mid to late May and begins dormancy with the first freeze. Buffalograss, however, is fairly tolerant of low temperatures in comparison to most warm season grasses. In fact, its range of adaptation in the U.S. stretches from southern Texas to North Dakota. When they are actively growing, buffalograss leaves are generally light green in color, how-

ever, great variation in color has been observed among genotypes. Other drawbacks include a lack of shade tolerance and a poor adaptation to sandy soils.

Because of its extremely high drought resistance and low maintenance requirements, buffalograss deserves a closer look here in Wisconsin, especially with today's environmental concerns. According to research work at Nebraska, one or more irrigations, depending on rainfall, will prevent summer dormancy in buffalograss while Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue may require weekly watering. A meager 1 to 2 pounds on N/M/S is adequate to maintain a high quality buffalograss turf. In addition, buffalograss is relatively free of plant pathogens with a few isolated cases of diseases being reported.

Research efforts at Texas A & M University and Nebraska have focused on improving color, appearance, recuperative potential, and lengthening the growing season. Here at the Noer facility, we are evaluating six buffalograss varieties; three of which are commercially available. The six varieties will be evaluated under high and low maintenance regimes. The high maintenance study will include mowing at 1.5 inches and a fertilization rate of 2 lb N/M/S. Low maintenance inputs will include a 3" mowing height and 1 lb N/M/S fertilization. Percent cover, spring greenup, color and quality are data parameters we will be evaluating.

Maybe buffalograss will do well as an alternative grass species in Wisconsin. Its drought resistance, low clipping yield, and low fertility requirements certainly make buffalograss worthy of evaluation.



Figure 2. Vegetative plugs were used to establish buffalograss at the Noer facility.

# WTA Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Summer Field Day at NOER Facility

By Monroe S. Miller

The tenth anniversary of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day found its permanent home in 1992 when it held court at the new O.J. NOER Turfgrass Research and Education Facility on August 18th.

The 350 in attendance toured the equipment displays and gave the new building a thorough inspection.

A formal 1½ hour research tour occupied a large block of time in the morning. Dr. Frank Rossi explained the USGA bentgrass trial and Tom Salaiz detailed the USGA buffalograss experiment (be sure to read Tom's article on buffalograss in this issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS*.)

Bill Bland and Nyle Wollenhaupt, both professors in the Department of Soil Science, have work at the NOER facility. Bland's work involves weather stations and measurement of growing conditions. Wollenhaupt is working with mulching and other forms of erosion control.

Fertility plots, cultural practice demonstrations, compaction effects on nutrient and pesticide losses from turf, and many other projects were detailed during the research tour.

Chuck Koval and Karen Delahaut had an "entomology consultation corner" set up in the shop area. It was a terrific idea that will hopefully be included in future field days.

Tom Harrison and Tom Schwab did another superb job as chairmen of the field day. As usual, Mike Semler and Monroe Miller handled registration and Gary Richards organized parking.

This year's field day again featured the good food offered by Gaylord Catering—they are a fixture at field day, too.

Thanks to Marsh Finner, Tom Salaiz and the UW Ag Research Stations' staff. They did a great job for their first turfgrass field day!

No field day would be complete without the support of the equipment and supplies exhibitors. They are noted here with appreciation.



Ed Witkowski was all smiles at the 1992 Field Day.

## 1992 WTA Field Day Exhibitors

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Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corp.



The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Field Day is a very colorful and busy affair.



Dave Strang, a longtime *GRASS ROOTS* advertiser from Galesburg, IL, was present at the field day.

# NOER Facility Dedication Held During Field Day

By Monroe S. Miller

It seemed too good to be true, maybe because it's taken so long. But the dream of many Wisconsin golf turf people did come true on August 18th when the O.J. NOER TURFGRASS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FACILITY was officially dedicated.

It was a perfect day for a ribbon cutting ceremony. The sun was shining, the temperature at the noon-time dedication was 75° and the breezes were light.

It seemed somehow appropriate that the research center was dedicated on the tenth anniversary of our field day—we celebrate a birthday and a birth at the same time.

And who could have lost sight of the significance of the presence of the new dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the newest addition to the CALS Ag Re-

search Station system for such a ceremony.

Isn't it somehow appropriate that Dean Roger Wyse comes from a state (Rutgers University in New Jersey) where the largest agricultural crop is turfgrass?

The dream script was complete when Dr. Frank Rossi stepped in place with the other dignitaries. The NOER facility was important in keeping that position and in attracting Rossi to Wisconsin.

The official opening was also an appropriate time to honor Dr. Leo M. Walsh, who played a key role in bringing the NOER research facility into reality. Without some key decisions on his part, the project wouldn't have happened.

It was a great day to say thanks to Profs. Kussow, Koval and Newman. All were there and Wisconsin Turf-

grass Association president Gary Zwirlein emphasized their collective contributions in planning and building the new turfgrass research station.

Marcy Schultz Heim, CALS fundraiser in the UW Foundation, received praise for her role. Marsh Finner's tremendous leadership was key in finishing off final details of the NOER facility. We can take great comfort knowing that it will remain under his control, now that our work is done.

Finally, the dedication ceremony offered a time for all those in the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association to reflect back on and enjoy the fruits of several years of hard work and commitment to the NOER project. It was, really, a good old-fashioned grass roots effort.

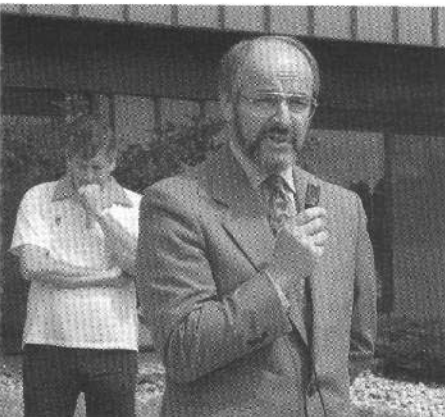
What a grand day it was!



WTA president Gary Zwirlein made introductions and offered his thoughts at the official opening of the NOER facility. L to R are Wayne Kussow, Marcy Heim, Leo Walsh, Marsh Finner, Chuck Koval, Roger Wyse, Frank Rossi and Gary Zwirlein.



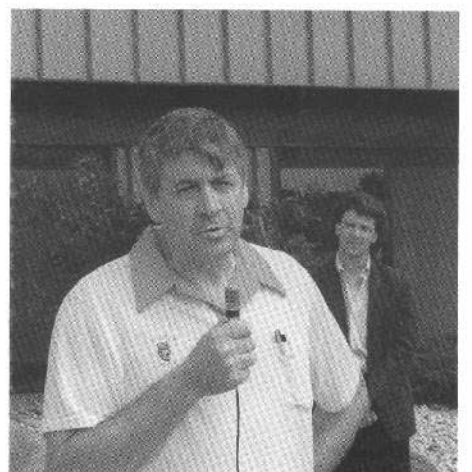
Marsh Finner and Gary Zwirlein handled official ribbon cutting duties!



Dr. Roger Wyse, new CALS dean, is keenly aware of the value of the turfgrass industry. He offered his support during his tenure as dean.



Professor Marsh Finner has the important job of overseeing the operation of the NOER facility. He is director of the UW-Madison's system of Agricultural Experiment Stations; the NOER facility is the newest addition to the system.



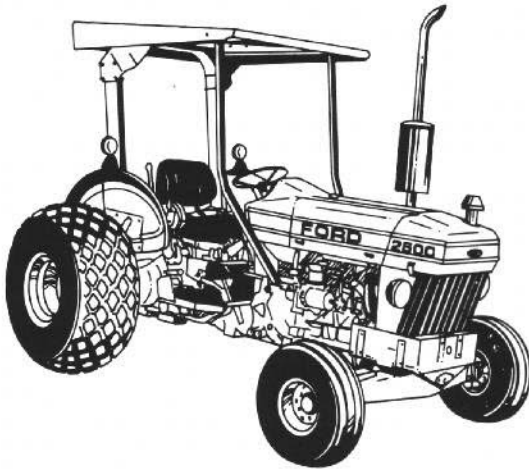
Professor Chuck Koval spoke on behalf of the faculty at the UW-Madison.

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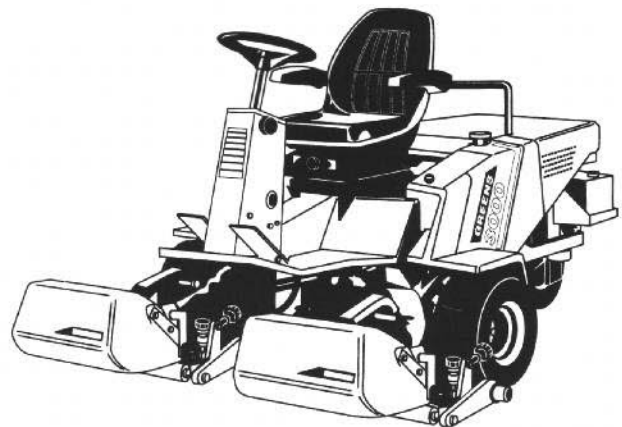
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# **NOER Foundation Presents Kussow With \$41,000 Grant!**

Jim Spindler, in his role as the research director of the O.J. NOER TURFGRASS RESEARCH FOUNDATION, travelled from his Pennsylvania home to the NOER research facility at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to present a major research grant to Dr. Wayne R. Kussow.

The grant is easily the largest ever made by the NOER FOUNDATION for turfgrass research. The very first research grant, made over 30 years ago, was to Dr. Jim Love for a nutrient deficiency symptom study.

The directors felt it would be most appropriate to make the first research grant to the O.J. NOER TURFGRASS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FACILITY.

O.J. NOER was a graduate of the Department of Soil Science at the UW-Madison. Love and Kussow are from the Soils Department, also.



Jim Spindler made a long trip to present Wayne Kussow with a research grant from the NOER Foundation.

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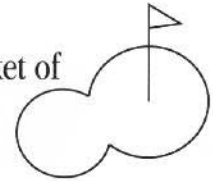


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