



Happy Hour at the Miramar Hotel in Kowloon. From left, Chip Lewison, Deb Sime, Barb Emmerich, Tom Emmerich, Randy Witt.



Brat fry at Chip's house. From Left Yang Li, Deb Sime, Barb Emmerich.



Our Guides in Guangzhou, from left, Yang Li and Li Tao.

foot high chain link fence topped with razor wire and security cameras. That sight really made me appreciate the freedoms we enjoy in this country.

Saturday was our last full day in Hong Kong. I worked on some drawings of the new irrigation system for Lie Tao while the ladies completed a final day of shopping. Chip found Johnsonville bratwurst at a local market, and that evening we had a traditional Wisconsin brat fry at Chip's residence.

The next morning we left Hong Kong Golf Club at 9:00 AM for the trip home. Between vans, airports, planes and buses, it took 22 hours to reach our front door. We were exhausted but happy to be home.

This trip was a great experience. I am grateful to Randy and Chip for giving me this opportunity and would definitely go back should opportunity arise. ♡



Brat fry at Chip's house. From Chip Lewison, Randy Witt, Li Tao.



Constructing an Olympic equestrian jump on the old course.



#18 Old Course, club house and Sheung Shui in the background.

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The Weather's the Story (Again)

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

As if we couldn't have guessed, the first half of 2006 was the warmest on record for the U.S. It is pretty dry and toasty here in Wisconsin as I write this at the midpoint of July. The governor has just instituted some emergency rules because of the dry and hot weather, especially in northwest Wisconsin.

The National Climatic Data Center reported that the average temperature for the contiguous United States from January through June was 51.8 degrees F, or 3.4 degrees F above the average for the 20th century. That made it the warmest such period since record keeping began in 1895.

My friends from New England experienced extreme amounts of rain and the subsequent flooding, but much of the rest of the country, including Wisconsin, continued below normal in precipitation. Through June 45% of the country was in the moderate-to-extreme drought condition, an increase of 6% from May. In our town we're already short three inches of moisture since June 1st. I guess the fortunate factor has been, that although the rainfall totals have been light in our area, they have been well timed.

Electric utilities report record demand. Fortunately for us, our peak demand (for irrigation pumping stations) occurs when utilities have the least call for power in the 24 - hour day. Fears began to mount about water supplies however, regardless whether the supply is surface water or well water. No wonder we are praying for rain and relief from the heat and dry weather.

My sense is that the disease situation has been quite manageable, due no doubt to the moderate

humidity levels. That leads to smiles from us and frowns from suppliers.

Some courses in larger metropolitan areas have altered maintenance practices during ozone alerts and healthy air warnings. Reduced mowing, different mowing times and short workdays have all been used to cooperate with state and local officials.

A summary of the soil moisture status around the state appears here, from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service.

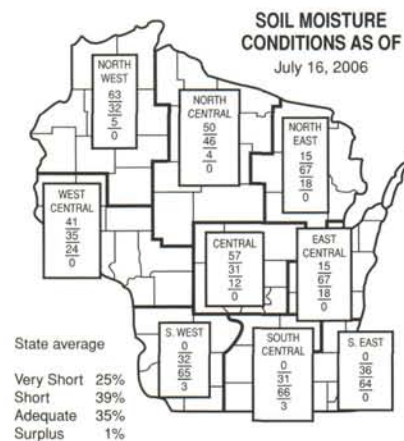
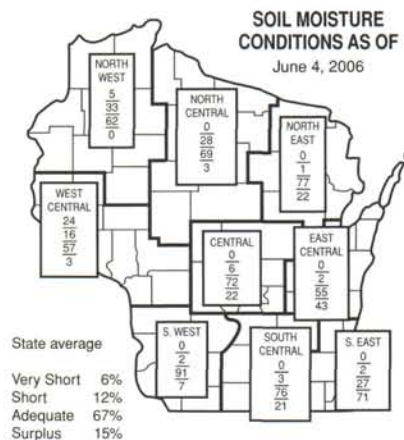
Since a lot of people have asked, here is the current status of the hiring process for a person to fill Dr. Wayne Kussow's position in the Department of Soil Science.

After acceptance of the generous offer of \$100,000 for the first year salary and benefit package from the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association last year, the Department advertised the position, interviews were held and candidates selected. The top candidate was offered the job and after protracted discussions, turned it down. The next candidate has been offered the job, and I cannot see, at this point of the year, much progress being made. Maybe I am wrong about that, but I don't think so. What I do know is this — somebody better shift into high gear real soon and get this position filled. No excuses will be accepted.

Congratulations to Dr. David Cookson. He was finally elected to the Wisconsin Golf Hall of Fame. Few of those accorded this great honor are as deserving as Dr. Cookson.

Cookson has been providing leadership in golf at the club, state and national level for more years that he'd probably like you to know. I personally watched him function as the long-time green committee chairman at Maple Bluff Country Club. He also served as club president.

His activities took him through the offices of the Wisconsin State Golf Association, including president. He wrote for the WSGA publication for years, and for several more years he was a columnist for *The Grass Roots*. The advice he





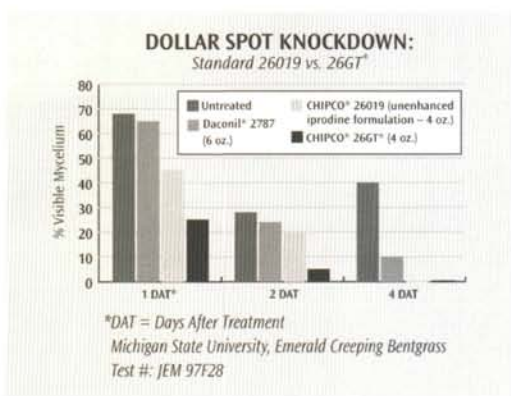
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was giving us 20 years ago has stood the test of time, and I often go back and reread those columns.

Nationally, Dr. Cookson has a long record as a USGA committee person and has an enviable record as a referee in many, many US Open tournaments.

Some time ago an administrative rule was adopted by the Hall of Fame committee that pretty much precluded past WSGA presidents from Hall of Fame selection. Coupled with that, his own humility and his chairmanship of the Hall of Fame committee, Cookson wouldn't allow any conversation about his election to the Hall. As I understand it, some maneuvering by Gene Haas and others allowed this overdue selection to take place.

Those of us who know him and who have benefited from his leadership and commitment to golf are thrilled. Three cheers for you, Doc!

Dan Quast made a trip down to Purdue University on July 17th to see Purdue's remodeled golf course and turfgrass research facility. Both impressed him. He also attended, at the request of JoAnn Otto and family, the presentation of the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation Award of Achievement ceremonies. This year the MRTF presented the award to Wayne Otto, a great recognition of his contributions to turf beyond the borders of Wisconsin. Danny accepted the award for the family.

Really, this is a great honor for all of us who knew Wayne. Danny also used the ceremony to share with the Midwest group information about the Wee One Foundation and the work they are doing on behalf of superintendents in need of help. The boundaries of the Wee One are clearly expanding beyond the borders of Wisconsin.

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Around the corner from Dr. Wayne Kusow's office in King Hall, on the second floor, is a beautiful recognition board that notes the recipients of the Kusow Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship. My question is this: if Wayne retired a year ago, why is he still working 50 or 60 hours a week either in his office or at the Noer Facility? No wonder we love the guy so much!

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Those of us who are wedded to Mother Nature by our profession find our lives governed by the seasons, none more so than the summer season. Although I know of no one who wants to wish his life away, summer on a golf course is an extremely abnormal existence. It is fine for some months, but as we reach the plateau of summer, there is a sense of relief that the days are indeed getting shorter and the daily average high temperature (83 degrees F in our town) is starting to decline. Cooler weather means we can look forward to a weekend off and a little free time at a time when the weather isn't totally miserable. Spirits are lifted by the thought of Field Day, Packer football, Badger training camp, and sounds of crickets and cicadas. Fall is near. Hang on for another month and life will become better. ♣



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WTA Golf Outing and Summer Field Day

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

Two events you won't want to miss this year are the WTA Summer Field Day and the 'Fundraiser for the Fellowship' Golf Outing. On Tuesday, August 1st, the Summer Field Day will be held at its traditional venue, the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research Facility in Verona. The Fellowship Golf Outing will take us to one of Wisconsin's newest and most anticipated golf course openings, Erin Hills Golf Course in Hartford, on Tuesday, October 10th.

Summer Field Day is the premier turf research day for Wisconsin's turf professionals. This event gives the University Turf Program an opportunity to showcase the research they're doing for the Wisconsin turf industry. It's a venue for you to meet all the UW turf researchers under one roof to discuss everything related to growing turfgrass.

Some of the talks featured on this year's research tour include:

- Lengthen fungicide effectiveness by avoiding resistance
- Lessen severity of take all patch
- Management of velvet bentgrass
- Breeding turfgrasses for the future
- Eminent threat to Wisconsin forests — Emerald Ash Borer
- Rain gardens plants and turfgrass for replenishing groundwater
- Biosolid rates for turfgrass establishment
- New weedy grass herbicides for use in fine turf
- Reduction of *Poa annua* populations in athletic fields
- From gophers to voles: dealing with small animal pests
- Turf Variety Trials
- Fungicide Trials

Additionally, the researchers are there to answer your questions. They are available between talks, over lunch, or during the trade show in the afternoon. You may want to bring in turf samples and lists of questions. They will give you practical solutions to make your job easier.

That is likewise the goal of the afternoon trade show. Thirty to forty exhibitors will be there to help you with all your commercial inquiries. They have information on every product, service, and piece of equipment that you could possibly need to help you in your job. Many let you test drive equipment to compare features between different makes and models.

There is a new look to the Noer Facility that you



Joe Deschler, from Horst Distributing, is one of many knowledgeable sales representative that will be answering your questions during the trade show.



Dr. Kussow giving an informative presentation during the 2005 research tour.

will see at this year's show. Fourteen new acres of turfgrass are established for hosting the Turf Producers International Field Day in 2007. You may demonstrate mowers to your heart's content on the new acreage.

I hope you have August 1st on your calendar to make the trip to Verona for this educational and fun day with researchers and colleagues. Registration forms were sent out in June. Contact Audra if you didn't receive one or have any questions about the event at 608-845-6536 or ajander2@wisc.edu.

The other important WTA event to have on your calendar is the - The golf outing has been held at

many of Wisconsin's finest courses. In keeping with that tradition, superintendent Jeff Rottier is presenting his brand new golf course, Erin Hills, to host the event this fall. The date for the 2006 WTA 'Fundraiser for the Fellowship' is Tuesday, October 10th.

We are very privileged to have Erin Hills as our host course this year. This is one of the most anticipated golf course openings in America. The course does not open until August, yet the USGA has already chosen it to host the 2008 Women's Amateur Public Links Championship. You know it has to be good being associated with the dynamic course design team of Michael Hurdzan, Dana Fry, and Ron Whitten. Its location likewise gives clues to the

grandeur, in Wisconsin's beautiful kettle moraine area, with its massive dune-like hills and deep glacial kettle holes formed by Mother Nature.

This course is really going to be a treat for participants. The added benefit of attending the fundraiser is to support the Graduate Fellowship in Turfgrass Research program at the UW-Madison. These turfgrass fellowships fund specific projects that will help turfgrass managers into the future. Once a Fellowship is fully funded, it will pay for new and important turfgrass projects for generations. Three fellowships are already funded or nearly funded and producing results. Some of those results include better interpretation of soil tests, improved putting

green construction mixes, and a new study, just now initiated, will compare plants used and construction techniques in rain gardens for replenishing groundwater supply.

The registration cost for the fundraiser is \$165, which is the cost the general public will pay to play Erin Hills. But your registration will also include lunch, and door prizes, some worth the price of admission. And of course you will be supporting turfgrass research and your profession's future.

The registration forms were mailed in June to all WTA members. Once again, call Audra if you didn't receive one or have questions about the Golf Outing. This event promises to be an outstanding way to wind down your golf season for 2006. ♣

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Seeding - What Works

By Mark Grundman, Jacklin Seed by Simplot

Editor's Note: Most chapter publications are not copyrighted – The Grass Roots is not, either – and share material. This excellent piece, written by Wisconsin's Mark Grundman, appeared in the June 2006 issue of ON COURSE, the official publication of The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. We thank them for its use, and we thank Mark for writing it.

In the past most have attempted intraseeding (seeding into an existing stand of turfgrass to shift plant populations) in one form or another with limited success. Some researchers and investigators will tell you the failures outnumber the successes by a wide margin. If odds are stacked against this process, why should we keep trying to intraseed? There are several answers, however, and Mother Nature is often the reason we need to keep trying to grow turf in this fashion. Adverse growing conditions generating turf loss such as the winter of 2004 and the summer of 2005 caused a number of golf courses throughout the Midwest to look to intraseeding as a method to compensate for the damage that occurred.

Sometimes turf managers will try and improve existing stands by seeding with improved cultivars and varieties because they offer better disease resistance, traffic tolerance and life at lower mowing heights. Perhaps one of the largest reasons behind an attempt to change our turf is our old friend Mrs. *Poa annua*. Often I hear "well if my current grasses do not survive, then *Poa annua* will save the day." Unfortunately, with shrinking budgets, the costs of maintaining *Poa annua* has become quite expensive. Thus, the need for grass replacement with a species or variety that is adapted to day-to-day usage is needed to help compensate for these problems

Setting Up a Program

My experience shows those turf managers that set up a plan to intraseed have the most success rather than those that just run out with the seeder at the first crack of cool weather. The first step to a successful plan is to answer the question: Why should I seed? Typically, your answer will be one of the following:

1. To increase density.
2. To change the genetic variability.
3. To increase the overall disease resistance.
4. To build better wear tolerance.
5. To build better uniformity and color into our grassed areas.

In giving this a great deal of thought, I find of all problems faced by turf managers faced by most turf managers, old Mrs. *Poa annua* keeps making her way to the top of the list. When battling any foe, it is important to know "thy enemy." A review of the strengths and weaknesses of *Poa annua* are as follows:

1. Invades whenever we have a problem.
2. Disrupts the uniformity of any course.
3. Enormous amounts of money spent to create a constant uniformity.
4. Shoot density declines during the summer months.
5. Dies when subject to heavy traffic and other summer stresses.
6. Prolific seed bank helps recovery, but not until end of golfing season.

And most importantly, we always compete with *Poa annua* when it is at its strongest.

The question asked every day on golf courses is, "how do we compete with such an aggressive plant?" The answer is easy — with an aggressive, better-adapted plant. We all know that an improved stand of bentgrass or bluegrass will significantly reduce the amount of management that we apply to our courses, and in turn will keep *Poa annua* at bay. So the real question is how do we do this successfully into an existing stand of turf.



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The first step is to take a critical look at the overall condition of the golf course and evaluate where we have the greatest number of problems. Next, set a realistic budget targeted to correct the reasons *Poa annua* invades. Typically these areas have poor drainage, low light levels, greater compaction, etc. Once these problems are remedied, evaluation and selection of the best turf species can occur.

This is a critical part of the program, and every step should be taken to look at each species and variety that will give the best edge against the competitive nature of the weedy species that invades our turf. Look for grasses that match color wise, are adaptable to current mowing and nutrient regimes, and offer strengths to maintain themselves against the problems of disease, high traffic, high heat and cold tolerance.

Ask your local seed vendors for information on varieties that show the strongest tolerance to the problems on your list. Second, evaluate this information through local test facilities. If none are available, regional testing sites can give great insight into the varieties that will work best. Remember, every site is different, so search for the grasses that will give you the best long-term solutions. One point to remember when mixing grasses or species is the mix or blend is no better than the worst variety or species in the formulation. Mix one susceptible variety in a formulation and within a few years the entire mix or blend becomes susceptible to the problems faced on site. From a local perspective, I like to utilize high chlorophyll content varieties. In recent NTEP studies, these performers have shown the strongest resistance to the day-to-day problems that most courses go through in the Midwest.

The final step is deciding when to seed. In the past, seeding in the fall was the accepted norm. It gave the best chance for survival to young seedlings, especially on courses that had minimal irrigation capabilities.

It was a time when we disrupt golf and golfers the least. Unfortunately, this is at a time when *Poa annua* is at its strongest. If we are to compete against *Poa annua*, based on several recent papers, the time to seed is at the end of May through the beginning of July. In the world of research, this might work well, but how can this be accomplished during the midst of the golf season? In recent years a number of new seeders and aerifiers have been designed to overseed fairways with very little disruption to golf. Utilizing these new machines is a start to the process.

After the variety and cultivar is selected, the next step is to determine the seeding rate. Current studies have shown another change on the horizon. One study compared common standards of seeding rates versus higher seeding rates of new aggressive varieties (2 - 4 lbs per 1000 sq. ft. with bentgrass and 5 - 10 lbs per 1000 sq. ft. with bluegrass). The studies were conducted in

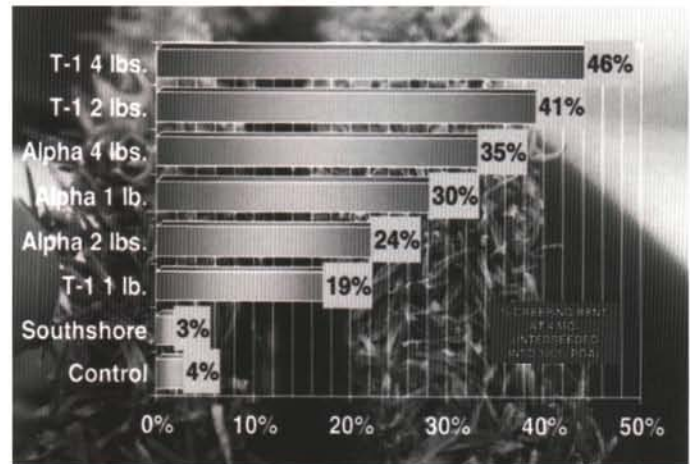


Figure 1. Data from intraseeding bent into 100% *Poa annua* from Jacklin Seed.

June into 100% stands of *Poa annua*. The higher rates prevailed and the rate of establishment was increased by 40% when compared to overseeding with lower levels of older cultivars of turf. (See Figure 1)

The next step in the process is placing the seed where moisture levels are the highest. In the past the practice has been to place the seed no deeper than three times the thickness of the seed into the soil. Unfortunately, most of the seed never came into contact with the soil at these shallow depths. Often we ended up placing the seed directly into the mat layer where seedlings would dry out, die and *Poa annua* would take this opportunity to prevail once again. It is imperative that seed is placed below the mat layer. This will insure successful seeding and establishment. Placing the seed at a level below the mat layer becomes critical to the success of the project.

If possible, prior to seeding, scalping of the existing turf should be accomplished. Recent tests conducted at Kansas State showed reducing the mowing height by half, for at least four weeks, increased the rate of establishment by thirty percent in the conversion process. Remember, the young seedlings need water and regular mowing at reduced or normal heights. This will help control the shading effects from older plants. Once established, the use of an herbicide designed to control *Poa annua* will help to control its encroachment and reestablishment of this weed.

Intraseeding works if you are able to rethink and follow new guidelines for successful establishment. There are some superb varieties available today, and if incorporated into a successful overseeding program, improved stands of existing turf are possible without the disruption to total renovation. The long-term results equate to reduced maintenance and improved playing surfaces for all. ♣