



TURFAX™



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TURFAX™ — The International Newsletter about Current Developments in Turfgrass

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The goal of this 6 issue per year newsletter is to provide international turf specialists with a network for current information about turf. It is FAXed to all Institute Affiliates that use the ISTI technical assistance services on an annual basis. FAXing is more costly, but ensures quick delivery to those outside the United States.

For non-affiliates, a TURFAX™ subscription is available by annual payment of U.S. \$60.00. Payment may be made by sending a check to the address below. Foreign orders please send a check or money order on a U.S. bank.

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WINTER ICE COVER PROBLEMS?

The injury mechanism and factors influencing low temperature kill were discussed in the most recent Turfax™. In the past four decades numerous writers have included ice cover damage caused by oxygen suffocation or toxic gases accumulation under the ice layer as being a major causes of winterkill. A survey of the turfgrass research literature on this subject reveals no valid scientific data to support this ill-founded concept.

One specific published study and numerous "real-world" field observations demonstrate that C₃ cool-season, perennial turfgrasses readily survive more than 50 days under dense ice coverage with no injury. A commonly published guideline advises removal of an ice cover after 20 days in place. There is no validity to this guideline as related to the fibrous roots and small crowns of perennial grasses. The 1960's origin of this 20-day maximum is based on Wisconsin studies with the very fleshy, high carbohydrate tap rooted alfalfa species. Physiologically, the root-crown system of this legume and of a turfgrass are drastically different.

The most complete ice cover study was conducted at Michigan State University by the author and Research Technician Jack Eaton. Three mature turfs, creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera* var. *stolonifera*), Kentucky bluegrass

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