



TURFAX™

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The International Newsletter about Current Developments in Turfgrass

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Turfax Projections

The El Nino effect is causing major seasonal climatic changes in many parts of the world: extended winter cloudiness from Florida west in the United States; continual rainy periods along the Atlantic Coast states of the U.S.; mild winter in the North Central U.S. Summer droughts in Australia and parts of the South Pacific. A relatively warm winter in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia.

Turfgrass managers who implement cultural practices based on calendar dates or traditional seasonal changes could be faced with significant problems. These major climatic changes from the seasonal norms dictate adjustments in turfgrass cultural programs based on a sound understanding of basic principles.

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Golf course construction and golf play remain very active due to favorable economic conditions in the United States; while a major slowdown has occurred in the Pacific Rim Countries which follows a strong period of growth. A

slowing of new construction to more realistic levels has occurred in Europe.

Sports field and stadium constructions also are very active in many parts of the world. Certain countries are especially active. France has completed preparations for the soccer World Cup 1998 and Malaysia has completed construction for the Commonwealth Games of 1998. Australia is involved in major construction for the Sydney 2000 Olympics, and Japan/South Korea are progressing well in developments for the soccer World Cup in 2002.

There is a great need for more public golf courses in many parts of the industrialized world, including the United Kingdom, Japan, United States, and most European countries. The National Golf Foundation reports that 66% of the golf rounds played annually in the United States are on public golf courses. Furthermore, 79% of all golfers play a majority of their rounds on public golf courses.

The demand for sod to be used on new construction sites remains high in most regions of the United States. The problem for many sod growers is maintaining adequate inventories. **Sod marketing exclusives of proprietary cultivars are increasing,** especially for warm-season turfgrasses.

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Consolidations of companies involved with the turfgrass industry are moving at a pace that has never before occurred, and will continue. During the past year:

- Jacobsen Division of Textron Inc. acquired Ransomes/Cushman/Ryan.
- The Scotts Company acquired Emerald Green, Miracle Garden Care Ltd., Levington Horticulture Ltd., Earthgro, Sanford Scientific, Inc. and the U.S. Home and Garden Consumer Products Business of AgrEvo Environmental Health, Inc.
- AgriBioTech, Inc. acquired 18 turfgrass and forage seed companies in the United States, including Fine Lawn Research Inc., Lofts Seeds, Inc., Willamette Seed Co., and Zajac Performance Seed.

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