

and nurserymen quite often buy by the acre for a better price break. Others either send their own trucks to the Farm or have Summit Hall deliver a few hundred yards of sod for the job underway.

#### Jan., Feb., "Down" Months

All of this activity goes on between March and December. January and February are down months, with the Farm usually settled under a blanket of snow. As work tails off towards the end of December, temporary help is gradually reduced, with the best of the men retained as long as possible. Foremen and supervisors are permanent employees and usually each year a few of the more promising temporary hands are added to the full-time staff. During January and February this crew of 15 men overhaul equipment; paint, repair, or improve apparatus in the Farm's maintenance shop.

#### Labor Shortage Increasing

As soon as the snow starts melting in early March, the call goes out to last year's temporary employees. Most have taken interim jobs as store clerks and gas station attendants, but are generally available when the season gets underway. College students are added towards the end of May. The cycle is perpetual and, Wilmot admits, the roughest part of the business. Each year, according to the manager, it gets harder and harder to find enough field help to keep production rolling as sales volume increases. "We have a corps of men who keep coming back year after year," he said, "but only those who enjoy outdoor work." The alternative, of course, is mechanization and the Farm has done a great deal of it.

However, machine operators, truck drivers, packers and a certain number of laborers will always be needed. Summit Hall's problem is not unique; labor shortage plagues the entire agricultural industry. It is highly unlikely though that the Farm, which has grown from small beginnings into a multi-million-dollar operation in 18 years, will be stymied by this problem.

## Maryland Sod Producers Unite; Form Sod Growers Assn.

"Better sod and a better sod industry," are goals set by recently formed Maryland Sod Producers Association.

Turfgrass producers in Maryland formed the association at a meeting in College Park, Md., April 19, as the result of discussion during a Maryland Sod Producers Conference, March 2.

Acting president of the new association is Parker Shirling, manager of Princeton Turf Farm, Centerville, Md. Other temporary officers elected by about 65 persons at the organization's first meeting include: vice president, Winton Osborne, Harford Sod Co., Fallston; secretary, Dr. Elwyn Deal, turfgrass specialist, University of Maryland, College of Agriculture; and treasurer, Emory R. Patton of R. P. Patton and Sons, Silver Spring. Edward F. Mayne, Olney, Md., along with the temporary officers, made up the committee to study MPS formation.

Temporary officers conducted a scheduled meeting May 17, where a proposed constitution and bylaws were presented.

Aims of the MSPA are to cooperate with the University of Maryland in an education program, and to develop close working relationship with the building industry in Maryland, and with turfgrass associations in other states.

## Salt-Tolerant Grasses Eyed for Roadside Use

Three coarse-textured grasses show considerable promise for roadside use where stand establishment is made difficult by high salt concentrations in the soil, reports a turfgrass specialist from Iowa State University.

Grass specialist Eliot Roberts says Kentucky 31 fescue, sand lovegrass, and blue grama have been most tolerant of high salt concentrations. Six other coarse-textured grasses also show promise for establishing cover quickly on salt-contaminated soil, Roberts adds. They are intermediate wheatgrass, Russian wildrye, slender wheatgrass, tall

wheatgrass, western wheatgrass and reed canarygrass.

Roberts explains that failure to establish grass stands along roadsides is becoming a serious economic problem. Lack of adequate cover leads to erosion and causes undermining of highway medians and underslopes.

In most cases, the grass is killed by high amounts of salt carried from highways by runoff water. The salt then becomes concentrated in the soil. During the past two winters, Roberts notes, as much as 50,000 lbs. of salt have been used per mile on some sections of 4-lane highways in Iowa. He points out that road beautification suffers as a result.

As a part of a study sponsored by the Iowa Highway Commission, Roberts is testing 23 more varieties of coarse- and fine-textured grasses for salt tolerance. Co-operating in the project is Edward Zybura, agronomy graduate assistant at Iowa State University.

## N. M. Horticulturist Says Clip Often for Hearty Turf

An important part of any good lawn maintenance program is the decision to mow frequently, reminds Douglas Bryant, horticulturist with New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Infrequent clipping, he says, allows grass to grow so much that any later mowing removes too much leaf surface. Bryant suggests that never more than 1/4 to 1/3 of the total leaf surface should be removed at one mowing.

To cut larger amounts of leaf surface results in physiological shock to grass plants. Bryant points out, "this causes excessive graying or browning of leaf tips and reduces the photosynthetic production of food and depletion of root reserves."

Another reminder Bryant advances to lawn care specialists concerns the value of prompt clippings removal. "Clippings left on a mowed lawn give disease organisms and insects an opportunity to attack," he explains.