



## What's New With 'The Grass People'

Scotts, "The Grass People," exhibited no small measure of confidence in just scheduling a professional turf seminar at its central Ohio headquarters in the first week of supposedly winterish November.

The first of the two days, Nov. 5 and 6, was chilly and cloudy, but the grass was green.

About 30 turf specialists, mainly sod producers and golf course grounds managers, were on hand to see what's new. They came anywhere from the eastern half of the U.S., from the East Coast to Kansas.

O. M. Scott & Sons, now in its 101st year, conducts several dozen seminars every year for people with various levels of knowledge about grass, from the professionals of this seminar to small gatherings of homeowners in towns and cities where there are Scotts dealers.

Nearly everything appears new at the Scotts layout in and around Marysville. And the company claims that 75% of its volume is in products not in existence 10 years ago.

Biggest and newest is a fertilizer production plant using Scotts patented "Polyform" process that began production this summer. The essential difference of Polyform from its early "Trionized" process is that nutrients are formed into solid particles that "are self-supporting, thus eliminating the need

for, and weight of, an inert carrier material."

The Trionized process uses the carrier vermiculite, a micaceous mineral that expands with heat (ore weighs 56 lbs./cu. ft.; the expanded carrier 7 lbs./cu. ft.) Nutrients in liquid form are applied to the accordion-like structure and dried. Upon application, soil moisture again releases the nutrients from the carrier.

Scotts calls on computers to keep track of some 16,000 varieties of

bluegrasses, its resource bank for developing new varieties or improving its patented Windsor. More than 100 acres of demonstration and experimental plots surround facilities at Marysville. Forty are devoted to turf varieties, 70 to herbicide and fertilizer evaluation.

Seminar guests inspected plots showing the improved response that Scotts ProTurf fertilizer formulations in the Polyform process achieved over earlier products. They saw demonstrations of variable



As sod growers and golf turf specialists look over this fertilizer spreader, compare the difference in dress with the picture above. After a cold cloudy start, the seminar ended sun-shiny and warm.

A tour of O. M. Scott & Sons grass research plots was part of the professional turf seminar. Dave Green of the research division explains at left how herbicides are applied to strip plantings of grass varieties to get maximum evaluation data. At right, he talks about a project under way to determine if quail feeding on pesticide-treated grass are affected. A humorous aspect of research problems, Green reported, is the difficulty in growing quack grass and keeping chinch bugs alive — for test purposes, naturally.



rates of herbicide applications combined with various mowing heights on all major turf varieties marketed.

Herbicide and pesticide residues are getting particular attention. A covey of quail is feeding on treated grass. The birds are moved each day for 21 days, conforming with government pesticide evaluation procedure. At the end of the feeding period, egg quantity, hatchability and shell thickness will be evaluated. Chemical residue and run-off are being checked under controlled conditions. Turf is being grown in cement tanks which permit sampling and evaluation of water run-off from artificially induced or natural rainfall.

One greenhouse is devoted to growth regulation research. An outside plot mowed and treated in late summer showed excellent control up to six weeks.

Paul Florence, who heads up Scotts sod-marketing division, discussed patent infringement with sod growers, in view of the difficulty in distinguishing Windsor from similar varieties such as Merion. Florence said closer policing will be pursued in the future. Earlier, the group was briefed on a technique of thin-layer chromatography with which Scotts' researchers can tell the difference between Merion and Windsor. In simplified terms, the process converts the plant material to a color spectrum interpretation which with consistency discloses a four-dot grouping for Windsor while

Merion exhibits two.

Bob Wilhelm, seminar manager, reviewed the major turf insects and diseases and oriented the group on the Scotts products designed to correct the various afflictions. Bill Weagly covered similar ground for weed identification and control.

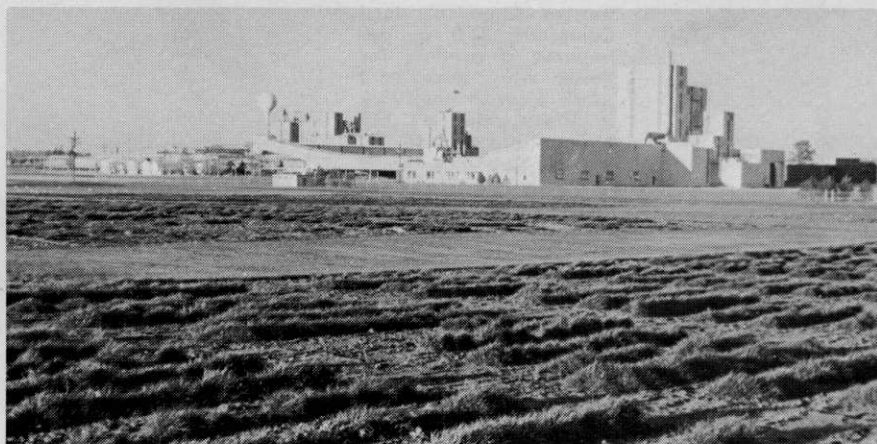
One of the more intriguing phases of the facility tours was the visit to Seed Technology, Inc., where Dale Kern instructed the group on how to interpret seed labels. A comprehensive article by Kern about seed analysis appeared in the January, 1969, issue of WEEDS TREES and TURF.

Kern warned the group that the seed label gives variety percentage by weight.

Though federal seed regulations specify the procedure, this method can grossly mislead the purchaser on the seed blend or weed content of the product he thinks he's getting, Kern said. There is a great difference in the number of seeds per pound for the many varieties of weeds and grasses, he explained.

The theoretical blend, for instance, which consists of 20% each by weight of bentgrass, bluegrass, fine fescue, tall fescue and ryegrass when converted to seed numbers, becomes: 75% bentgrass, 18% bluegrass, 4% fine fescue, and 1.5% each of tall fescue and ryegrass.

Seed analysis services and fees are available by writing Kern in Marysville, Ohio 43040.



In the background of field plots of grass varieties is the O. M. Scott & Sons complex at Marysville, Ohio. The large building at right is the new Polyform chemical plant that went on stream this summer.