



Dr. Robert W. Toler, (c) associate professor of plant pathology with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and Department of Plant Sciences at Texas A&M University, receives the Distinguished Service Award. F. J. Milberger of Bay City, association president, (r) makes the presentation. Looking on is Dr. David Rosberg, head of the plant sciences department.

## Texas Sod Producers Honor A&M Pathologist

The Texas Sod Producers Association has honored an associate professor of plant pathology at Texas A&M University with a Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Robert W. Toler received the award at the annual meeting of the Texas Sod Producers Association in Corpus Christi recently. He was honored with a plaque upon which was inscribed: "In recognition of his outstanding research accomplishments in the control of St. Augustine Decline disease and the significant contribution of his research efforts to the Commercial Sod Pro-

ducing Industry of Texas.

Toler, who specializes in virus diseases, was leader of the project work which recently uncovered a new variety of St. Augustine grass that has resistance to SAD (St. Augustine Decline), a virus disease. The new variety has been jointly released by the agricultural experiment stations of Texas and Florida and is called Floratam.

Dr. Toler joined the Texas A&M staff in March, 1966. Before coming to Texas he was stationed in Georgia as a plant pathologist with the Agricultural Research Service, USDA. He is a native of De Witt, Arkansas and holds degrees from the University of Arkansas and North Carolina State University.

## MAJOR SOD PROBLEM (from page 45)

and rhizome growth. This means weaker sod and slower sod development, thereby decreasing production efficiency, English said. On this organic soil, some nitrogen—at least 15 pounds nitrogen per acre per month—was needed for good sod.

Timing of nitrogen application was very important. Discontinuing or reducing nitrogen applications during the hot summer months gave stronger, more mature sod in the fall of the year. Heavy nitrogen applications should definitely be avoided during the summer months, he emphasized.

English also pointed out that clipping yields ranged from a low of 0.25 ton dry weight per acre from the unfertilized plot for the year to a high of 4.25 tons per acre on the

plot receiving 120 pounds nitrogen per acre per month.

He said that as the rate of nitrogen applied was increased, the nitrogen content in the clippings increased to a maximum of 6.1 percent. Sod which received lower nitrogen rates gave generally faster rerooting into new soil.

Nitrate levels in the soil increase with the heavy nitrogen treatments, but due to variability the use of soil nitrate tests did not prove to be a useful tool to predict the nitrogen needs for sod.

The agronomist added that there was a general increase in soil nitrate levels during the season, indicating that nitrogen was being released by soil microorganisms at warmer soil temperatures.

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