



# Sod Producers Updated in Clearwater

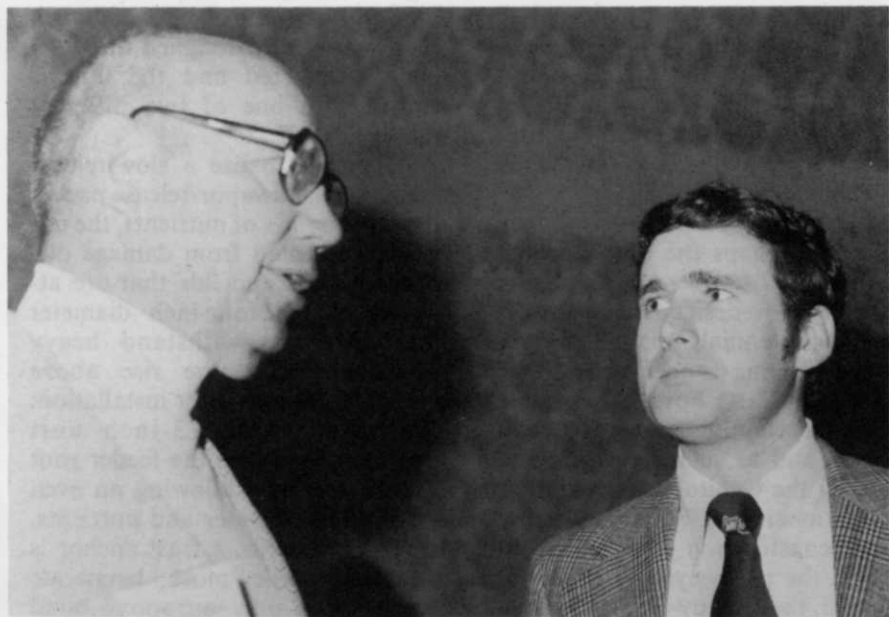
Almost 200 members of the American Sod Producers Association attended the association's mid-winter conference last month at the Sheraton-Sand Key Hotel in Clearwater Beach, Fla. Many members of the association brought their wives and families along on the trip to take in the sights of sunny Florida, which turned out not to be so sunny after all. The weather held up for a dusty field trip to Pursley Grass Co. in Palmetto, and then opened its skies with rain for the long bus ride back to the hotel. Indoors, association treasurer Tom Thornton of Thornton's Turf Nursery, Elgin, Ill., put together a well-attended educational session of many nationally known speakers.

Tom Mascaro, of Safe-T-Lawn in Miami led off the speaker's session with his well-practiced talk "Dew Is Not Dew". He said the grass plant exudates water which is sticky and can be associated with some diseases. He said dollar spot spores grow better in this medium. He said the spore germinates in the droplet and moves up and destroys the blade. He said the water can drop down and if there is quickly available nitrogen there, its mixture will produce leaf burn. Spores also

move more rapidly in exuded water. He said there is a definite relationship with this water and disease. He said it is time to take the existence of this water into consideration in turf management, and that early morning watering dilutes the water and makes it less harmful to the grass. He also said each type of grass exudes water at different rates.

Dr. Henry Indyk of Rutgers University led a panel of experts discussing new products on the market for weed control. Dr. Everett Burke of the Agricultural Experiment Sta-

tion in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., discussed "Kerb" for control of *Poa annua* on warm-season grasses. Paul Jacquemin of O.M. Scotts, Inc., Marysville, Ohio, discussed his company's new "Selective *Poa annua* Control" which is now available in the Midwest and part of the East. Steve Carlyle, of Ag-Division, Rhodia in Gainesville, discussed his company's "Ronstar" a pre-emergence herbicide for crabgrass. Dr. Al Turgeon of the University of Illinois discussed use of "Bosagran" for control of yellow nut-



American Sod Producers Association executive secretary Bob Garey (left) with association legal counsel Bill Harding at the meeting banquet.

*Above: Soil fumigation with a layer of plastic at Pursley Grass Co., Palmetto, Fla., the site of a bus tour at the American Sod Producers Association winter conference.*



Leonard Wittig, of Wittig Sod Farm, Boling, Texas at a break from the bus tour.



Robert Bobbenhouse, Bobbenhouse Landscaping, Des Moines, Iowa at the annual banquet.

sedge. Ed Jordan, senior sales specialist for Monsanto, discussed his company's "Roundup" for perennial weed control.

Doyle Jacklin of Vaughan-Jacklin Seed Co., Spokane, Wash., and Dr. Bill Myer of Turf Seeds, Inc., Hubbard, Oregon, conducted a panel relating the seed industry to the sod grower. Jacklin explained the continuing benefits of the "Certified Sod Quality Gold Tag Program" which allows only up to 0.02 percent weeds in seed while the prevailing standard certified quality seed can now contain up to 0.30 percent weeds.

Jacklin explained seed prices have been extremely depressed in the last 16 months, because of the poor economy, low housing starts (which means less house sod), and record seed production which has produced an oversupply of grass seed. He said availability of fine ryegrasses has further increased the bluegrass problems for his industry. With prices down, he said grass seed growers were quick to react. He said 50 percent less bluegrass acres were harvested last year, and fescues were cut even more, while ryegrasses were down only 20 percent.

Dr. Myer discussed problems of burning fields in the Willamette Valley region of Oregon, where much of the seed production for the United States is done. Burning of the straw in the fields negates the problem of what to do with the straw, and also sanitizes the field for future plantings. But environmentalists and the Oregon legislature want the seed industry to be pollution-free, Myer said. He said smoke management programs using planes to determine good days to burn based on wind patterns have proven somewhat successful thus far. Also, field sanitizers, which burn the straw internally with little smoke have also proven successful, but are much too slow for the scope of burning needed. He said flexibility is needed within the government structure and that the industry can and is confronting the problem now.

Association legal counsel Bill Harding listed areas in which the association helped members during the year with legal problems.



Tom Thornton, Thornton Turf Nursery, Elgin, Ill., organizer of the meeting's educational sessions.



Dr. Henry Indyk, Rutgers University, one of the speakers at the conference.



Dr. Al Turgeon (left), Dr. Bill Myer and Doyle Jacklin, speakers at the American Sod Producers Association winter conference.



A break from the bus tour of Pursley Grass Co. gave conference attendees a chance to relax and sip soft drinks under some Florida foliage.

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