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# TO OUR READERS —

December was a busy month for the WEEDS TREES & TURF staff. On the 8th, I headed for Columbus for the Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show while Assistant Editor Eric Friedman went East to New Jersey Turfgrass Expo 76.

Going to these conferences and shows has got to be one of the most rewarding aspects of the job. It's here where we really get to meet our readers and contributors face-to-face. Communication is open, uninhibited.

The show in Columbus was a fantastic success. Nearly 1200 people attended the three-day series of seminars and exhibits. Among the notables was Dr. Robert Schery, director of the Lawn Institute. Dr. Schery was the author of our article on cultivars (October 1976). A friendly, personable man, he said feedback has been excellent and has promised to do another piece for us.

Among the many seminars I attended was one presented by Steven Kennedy, superintendent of the Columbus Country Club, on buying an irrigation system. Kennedy's talk was well received, and since our focus this month is irrigation, I got it all on tape. We present his straight-from-the-hip advice on page 15. Unfortunately, we could not transcribe his humor which struck familiar chords with many in the audience.

Friedman tells me his experience at the New Jersey Expo was "most edifying." He was hosted by Dr. Henry Indyk, the tireless, paternal chairman of the conference. In summing up the conference, Dr. Indyk told WEEDS TREES & TURF that a major objective was to bring together the total turfgrass industry.

"The format of the New Jersey Turfgrass Expo 76 effectively provided an opportunity not only for the dissemination of useful infor-

mation on a wide range of topics, but also as an attractant for the unification of the heterogeneous mix which comprises the total turf industry."

Even more importantly, he added, than the attendance figures, which totaled more than 800, were the diverse turfgrass interests that were attracted for the pursuit of a common objective — increased knowledge for better turf. "It was Green Power in the true sense of the phrase."

After Expo 76, Friedman went west to La Jolla, California, to interview irrigation consultant Don Burns. Because of the hectic pace that Burns maintains, he was not the ideal subject for a fireside tete-a-tete. Friedman stalked him from the serene, coastal refuge into the desiccated flatlands of the Palm Desert where an omnipresent sun and the Santa Ana winds bake the picachos and breathe quick warmth into the desert bowl. How does Don Burns irrigate a barren wasteland? Find out on page 28.

More travel as that is the name of the game. We'll be heading west in January for the annual meeting of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and to Dallas for the Southern Weed Science Society. We'll also be at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America convention in Portland in February. WEEDS TREES & TURF will have an exhibit booth. Stop in and talk with us. We need to hear from you.

Now we must get a bit more somber. As we put together our

irrigation issue we were constantly reminded of man's incredible indifference to his own well being.

In the past year we have witnessed drought-like conditions reminiscent, perhaps, more of an episode from the "Twilight Zone" than of days we can recall. Water has become a priceless commodity.

Data compiled by the Agricultural Climatology Service Office of the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce in Washington yield the conclusion that the eastern Dakotas, Minnesota, northern and western Iowa, eastern Nebraska, and portions of Missouri suffered drought patterns similar to the record drought of the 1930s. Irregular rainfall patterns across the United States caused a multitude of drought-drainage problems. These were compounded by high temperatures and stiff winds, resulting in extensive turf damage.

For some reason, complacent folks that we are, we respond with alarm to crisis situations, but we fail to make ongoing provisions for addressing the source of the problem once the furor has waned.

We are extremely fortunate to possess the caliber of technology which can attempt to balance some of the mysterious inequities of the ecosystem. The highly evolved state of our irrigation systems and products is a tribute to our ingenuity. We must, however, learn as a nation that an inordinate sense of economic well being and technological prowess coupled with indulgent overuse of our natural resources is a formula for disaster.

In the coming year we must necessarily measure our uses of water against our own stringent guidelines for need.

