

SOD PRODUCER NEWS

Study determines effects of fungicides on thatch and pH

Different fungicides induce significant variations in thatch accumulation, according to research of Dr. Smiley, assistant professor of turfgrass pathology at Cornell University.

After testing 14 fungicides and one nematicide on Kentucky bluegrass turf through three seasons of application, Smiley found that some spur significant accumulation of thatch while others cause little or no accumulation.

"Our results indicate that decomposition of thatch was possibly impeded through the inhibition of microbial activities by unfavorable pH environment and/or by direct toxicity of the fungicides," said Smiley.

He said that decomposition of sulfur-bearing fungicides contributed sufficient acidity to inhibit the decomposition of thatch and these acidification processes explain the magnitude of thatch accumulation in most instances.

The study prompted Smiley to say that too often fungicide choice is made only by taking immediate cost and target pathogens into consideration, without considering the long-term effects which the fungicide may have.

Sod roof makes good insulator, attracts international attention

An Encino, CA, couple caught the attention of many people passing by and news media from different countries when they installed 3,000 feet of bluegrass sod on their roof.

JoAnn and Kenneth Cowans spent seven years researching the project, especially the subject of transpiration cooling. Their whole purpose behind installing the sod roof was the tremendous cooling and cost benefit it provides. Their electric bill has been cut by

half to two-thirds since the sod was put in, and the temperature in the house during the winter months is milder.

Mowing takes about two hours and is a challenge. Peaks and a network of irrigation lines on the roof can be easily damaged. The bluegrass itself is susceptible to heat damage and fungus, and the Cowans require professional help.

Help comes from the company who grew the sod, Pacific Green Sod, Camarillo, CA. President Richard Rogers said, "This was probably the most publicized 3,000 feet of bluegrass we ever grew." The story appeared on the front page of the Los Angeles Times, was the subject of two television interview, and drew media calls from Canada and Europe.

Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council builds display for museum items

Funds from the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council and collected turfgrass memorabilia are helping to build a new area of museum pieces on the Penn State University campus.

The council, which has grown to about 400 members, is funding the cost from membership dues, trade shows, and turf schools. All types of turf equipment, donated by golf course superintendents and other grounds managers, have accumulated to warrant their own housing.

Dr. Joseph Duich, professor of turfgrass science and liaison between the council and university, said some of the items date back to the early days of turf equipment. These include early sod cutting equipment, sickle mowers with two blades, old spiking and brushing equipment, early aerifiers, punches, fertilizers, spreaders, and seeders. Turfgrass students are sandblasting the metal and refinishing the equipment.

Dutch expects that the building will be constructed by the end of the year.

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