

GREEN INDUSTRY NEWS

SEED

Zoysia seeding may replace plugging

United States Department of Agriculture has discovered a method of propagating zoysiagrass by seed, according to the USDA. The discovery is particularly noteworthy to the turfgrass industry because zoysia's use has previously been limited by its inability to be adequately spread by seed.

Dr. Doyi Yeam and research agronomist Jack Murray first suggested an alternative technique to the traditional "plugging" method of zoysia germination while doing research at the USDA's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. They found that by

soaking seeds in a 34 percent potassium hydroxide (KOH) solution for 25 minutes and then exposing them to 48 hours of low intensity light, they could induce more than 90 percent of the zoysia seed to germinate within six days. Untreated seed takes six weeks to reach 30 percent germination.

The KOH solution breaks the seed coat and eliminates a growth inhibiting enzyme present in the seed, while the low intensity light stimulates rapid and uniform germination, explained Murray.

Zoysia propagated by treated seed

was also found to spread at least twice as rapidly than when established by any other method. After only three weeks, 67 percent of the treated seed area was covered by grass, with an average of 218 plants per square foot. Untreated seed, by comparison, had covered only three percent of its area, averaging only seven plants per square foot.

Zoysia works best when applied on bare earth with a smooth roller after drop seeding. Despite the grass's knack for keeping weeds at bay, it performs poorly when seeded into existing turf.

CHEMICALS

Diamond Shamrock earmarks \$20 million for Dacthal plant

Diamond Shamrock Corp., Cleveland, OH, has approved funds for the reconstruction of the Agricultural Chemicals division's Dacthal plant in Houston, TX.

Plant reconstruction will begin early

in 1982 with the project scheduled to be completed by the end of the 1982 third quarter. The total cost will be in excess of \$20 million. Dacthal herbicide is expected to be available for the 1983 growing season.

Engineering work for the plant's reconstruction is already underway. Demolition of the damaged portion of the plant has already been completed.

Dacthal production was halted in July, 1981, when an explosion damaged the Houston plant.

In other Diamond Shamrock news, Kurt Schwartau has been named product manager for the Agricultural Chemicals division. Prior to his promotion, Schwartau was a sales representative in the division's midwest region. He has been with Diamond Shamrock since 1979.

Price cut announced At Ronstar G meeting.

A new, lower price for Chipco Ronstar G herbicide was announced by Rhone-Poulenc Chemical Co., Monmouth Junction, NJ, at its northeast distributor meeting held in Atlantic City, NJ.

New production efficiencies have permitted the average price to be reduced 12 to 14 percent below 1981 levels, according to Gerald Quinn, Ronstar G product manager. "Ronstar G can now effectively compete in a broad range of turf market," said Quinn. "Its ease of application and gentleness to a wide variety of turfgrasses and ornamentals make it one of the most cost effective preemergent herbicides available for the control of grassy weeds."

At the meeting Dr. Ralph Engel and Dr. Henry Indyk, both of Rutgers University-Cook College, presented results of their Ronstar G research.

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Derby perennial ryegrass, International Seed Co., Halsey, OR, was advertised on a hot air balloon at the Southern California Turf and Landscape Equipment Show. The balloon was co-owned by Bud Franklin, Capitol Nursery, Phoenix, AZ and Gary Harrington, Mesa Country Club, Mesa, AZ. (See Landscape Update on page 11.)