

Ohio State profs observe drought

KENT, Ohio — "We are going to be selling fertilization as an aid to recover from the drought," says Richard Rathgens of Davey Tree Co. "Our clients are receptive."

Rathgens was addressing a group of green industry experts at a "drought seminar" held at Davey Tree here this spring.

Rathgens also noted that Davey Tree lost about \$500,000 to the drought last year. "People cancelled fertilization, wanting to wait and see what happened," he noted. "Many of the lawns did recover. We did a lot of seeding last fall and many customers are requesting it this spring."

Because of the overly dry conditions, many diseases showed up in lawns, Dr. Chuck Powell of Ohio State University observed.

"We saw a lot of unusual turf diseases. I think it was because the grass was pre-disposed to diseases. Are they still pre-disposed this spring? It'll be interesting to see."

Powell noted that red thread "was showing up in

SEED

Oregon groups promote burning

SILVERTON, Ore. — In one corner of the green industry is the fight over water regulations. In another brews the battle over field burning.

The Oregon Women for Agriculture issued thousands of brochures in March explaining the benefits of field burning in an attempt to snuff out efforts by some to ban the practice.

"Our organization exists for educational purposes," says Caroline Simmons. "We felt we had to make some noise."

The fervor of anti-burn activists was ignited by an August, 1988 traffic accident in which seven people were killed. Drifting smoke

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Panelists at Davey Tree discuss the drought (left to right): Drs. John Street, Bill Pound and Chuck Powell of Ohio State University; Richard Rathgens of Davey Tree; Dr. Elton Smith, also of OSU.



95°F weather" and that "fungus diseases went wild."

Dr. John Street of Ohio State also had some interesting observations.

"One thing we quickly realized," he said, "is that the public connotes brown with dead. But when city officials learned the term 'dormant,' they went too far the other way and used it as a panacea."

Street said that Kentucky bluegrass in unirrigated areas experienced a 20 to 30 percent death rate. Kentucky-31 tall fescue did not go dormant at all "and came back extremely well." Fine fescues experienced the greatest failure rate. "Lawns with more thatch were the ones that were extensively damaged," Street said.

The sessions were chaired by Jim Chatfield, county extension agent for Akron and vicinity. Also serving on the panel were Dr. Bill Pound and Dr. Elton Smith. □

GOLF

Prolific golf writer Herb Graffis passes away at 95

FT. MYERS BEACH, Fla. — Herb Graffis, one of the golf industry's staunchest supporters, passed away here February 12.

Graffis and his brother Joe, who died in 1979, co-founded *Golfdom* magazine in 1927. *Golfdom* magazine eventually became *Golf Business*, which was folded

TURF

Drought tolerance reviewed

PLAINVIEW, N.Y. — To best prepare for drought conditions, why not install the best drought-tolerant grass? No reason not to, says Maria Cinque of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County.

As strict water conservation becomes an industry standard, Cinque says it will be much easier to reduce lawn water by selecting varieties like:

- Tall fescues, which are the most drought tolerant, according to Cinque. They also can grow on a wide range of soils with less than normal amounts of fertilizer.

- Fine fescues, which are drought and shade tolerant, and prefer not to be over-watered or over-fertilized. Cinque suggests using them in combination with Kentucky bluegrass or perennial ryegrass.

- Perennial ryegrasses, which are quick germinators, are wear tolerant and grow fairly well in light to moderate shade.

- New varieties of Kentucky bluegrass combine good looks with reduced maintenance.

- Zoysiagrass, which can provide a thick, cushiony turf. It withstands high temperatures, grows well on poorer soil and can be mowed closer than most northern cool-season grasses. □



Cinque

into the old *Weeds Trees & Turf*, in 1977. Two years ago, WT&T became *Landscape Management*.

The elder Graffis (he was 95 years old at the time of his death) was a prolific golf writer, helping organize the Golf Writers Association of America. In 1975, Graffis wrote "The PGA," the of-

ficial history of the organization.

He also had a hand in helping organize what is now the National Golf Foundation.

Graffis was born in Indiana, but attended Northwestern University and spent much of his life in the Chicago area. □