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courses in northern and southern Michigan built recently with bentgrass greens, tees and fairways," notes Vargas. "Once those (areas) get into shade, pretty soon you see a tremendous thinning of the bentgrass, and soon the annual bluegrass is in there."

"Whether you use PGRs, Progress or whatever, you're going to have annual bluegrass in shaded areas. You're also going to have it in high traffic areas with tremendous amounts of wear and compaction. It's the only grass that can tolerate that compacted soil."

Perkins believes that "full-season survival (of annual bluegrass) almost becomes a genetic problem." He suggests that bio-

technology could eventually be a solution.

DowElanco is embarking on biotechnology as it relates to green and growing plants. We haven't reached the point of manipulating the genotype that is *Poa annua*. That could be in the future."

Says Dr. Bruce Branham of MSU: "(Improving winter hardiness) is a question that gets into plant physiology and it is one that you can't do much about."

Branham believes poa's vulnerability to winter kill is one of the best reasons to try a different species.

"We're not going to manage our way out of winter hardiness without a much more genetic approach," Branham says. □

### RESEARCH

## Mowing effects on nutrition begun by Bolens

KUTZTOWN, Pa. — A study to measure nutrient levels in soil after repeated grass cuttings has begun. It is sponsored by Bolens Corp., Port Washington, Wisc., and the Rodale Research Center here.

The three-year test also will determine the nutrient benefits of returning grass clippings to the soil with a mulching mower versus the collection and bagging of clippings with a conventional walk-behind mower.

The study was announced jointly by Bolens product manager Tom Wellnitz and Dr. Robert D. Hart, director of the Rodale Research Center.

"Bolens and Rodale have agreed to run this experiment because the disposal of grass clippings has become a major environmental concern for communities all across the country. We both believe a mulching mower can offer a very viable and effective solution," says Wellnitz.

"We wanted to objectively and quantitatively verify previous assertions that mulching returns increased nitrogen and nutri-

ents to the soil."

Many of the reported benefits of mulching are based on a Michigan State University study done from 1972 to 1974. The study revealed that mulching produces a generally greener and healthier lawn because mulch particles decompose and are absorbed by the grass root system within 14 days.

Mulch, the study showed, returns nutrients to the soil and allows evaporation at the soil level without adding to thatch buildup.

The new tests, as announced by Bolens and Rodale, will be held at the research center's 305-acre facility in Kutztown, Pa.

Two identical grass-covered plots have been set aside. They will be mowed (the grass cut at specific heights) on a weekly basis—one with a Bolens walk-behind mulching mower and the other with a Bolens walk-behind rear bagging model with its collection bag attached.

Intermediate and deep soil cores will be taken before and after each growing season. They will be analyzed for leaching, nitrogen and other mineral and nutrient activity levels by the center staff and by Pennsylvania State University. □