

# Overseeding should be thought about 12 months of the year, Bruneau says

RALEIGH, N.C. — Winter overseeding is an annual event we should be thinking about all the time, says Art Bruneau, Ph.D., of North Carolina State University.

"Overseeding bermudagrass ought to be in the back of our minds 12 months out of the year because we need healthy, dense turf in order for it to endure the physical abuse it takes during the actual overseeding process," says Bruneau.

Year-round proper mowing frequency and height, fertilization, and manageable thatch levels are essential to successful overseeding, says Bruneau.

Speaking at the North Carolina Turfgrass and Landscape Field Day, Bruneau adds that the best time to overseed is when soil

temperatures are between 76 and 78 degrees, or about 30 days before the first frost.

"The rationale is that if the seedlings start coming up (hopefully within 30 days) the bermudagrass will start going off color, slowing in growth and then the overseeding will kick in and no one will be the wiser for what you've done out there."

Bruneau suggests we aerify four weeks and verticut two weeks in advance of overseeding in order to give the bermudagrass time to heal. Two to three days prior, stop mowing. The taller turf will slow down potential washing of seed.

As for seed selection, Bruneau suggests we use certified, blue tag seed. Ryegrass is the most common, alone or with fine fescue or *Poa trivialis* (rough

bluegrass). Seed treated for disease prevention is desired. "We need that treatment to prevent the loss of grasses when we reach the higher summer temperatures," he notes.

Bruneau prefers higher rates: 30/lb. per 1,000 sq. ft. for greens; 200 to 225 for fairways; 5 to 15/lb. per 1,000 sq. ft. for home lawns. (Note: ryegrasses won't have great density at lower rates. Use 10 to 15/lb. per 1,000 sq. ft. if density is a major concern.)

"If you go with the higher rates you'll hopefully end up with plants

that will stay in the juvenile state throughout the fall and into early spring. If you plant too early, the plants mature, persist longer and probably won't go out when you want them to."

Also, don't fertilize two to three weeks after seeding, says Bruneau. After three weeks, use ½ lb. of quick-release N per 1,000 sq. ft. every 3-4 weeks.

During the transition period, adds Bruneau, verticut weekly, lower the mowing height to put stress on cool-season grasses, aerify and lightly verticut. □

## RIGHTS-OF-WAY

### Plant research seeking to alleviate three 'syndromes'

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Harlow Landphair of the Texas Transportation Institute believes that three "syndromes" as related to perception of highway maintenance need to be corrected:

- In "The Green Scrap Syndrome," the highway and its rights-of-way areas are considered to be "left-overs."

- "The Green Fantasy Syndrome" causes the highway corridor to be viewed as similar to, or an extension of, the surrounding landscape.

- In "The Green Belligerence Syndrome," roadside plants are viewed as "little green things" that defy permanent solutions.

In a new research program at Texas A&M University, Landphair works in cooperation with the state highway department to clearly define the purpose and importance of roadside vegetation.

A "field laboratory" consisting of sections of roadside area near the Texas A&M campus in College Station is being used for the research.

"The initial research in-

cludes four areas of inquiry," explains Landphair: slope stability and erosion control; plant dynamics; moisture and plant hydraulics; and drought and pollution tolerance.

"The specific objective of this program," he continues, "is to better understand the engineering properties of plant materials so they can be used more effectively and reduce the cost of roadside maintenance."

The basic functions of the roadside, says Landphair, make it more deserving of special attention.

"The immediate shoulder provides information, lighting, emergency stopping areas, and runoff recovery. The middle zone is usually occupied by drainage channels. The back slope generally provides space for large information standards and lighting, as well as access to and screening from adjacent property."

According to Landphair, environmental conditions surrounding the roadside also make it worthy of more care.

—Terry McIver □



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