

lawn care companies, manufacturers, retailers, university extensions services and associations offering community events and educational programs to increase public awareness.

In marking the special week, the association offers

these grasscycling tips:

- Keep mower blades sharp.
- Mow at proper intervals so no more than one-third of lawn height is trimmed at each cutting.
- Maintain proper water and fertilization levels. □



#### RESEARCH

## Thatch, weed cure: longhorns on lawn?

AUSTIN, Tex. — Eleven Texas longhorns have taken up residence at the National Wildflower Research Center to help researchers find the best method of restoring native prairie land. The cattle, which arrived last November, will be used at first to reduce the amount of thatch in the center's 15 vegetated acres, as well as to control bermudagrass.

"There is a major push to restore and maintain prairie land," says Alison Hill, Wildlife Center community ecologist. "Cattle have been a natural part of the tallgrass prairie in Texas. This long-term study is to discover the best way to rehabilitate the land from a monoculture to a greater diversity of plant species."

Wildflower Center researchers will study the effects of grazing as a tool to

control exotic grasses so native prairie grass species can be re-introduced and encouraged to grow.

In a non-related study, the research center has developed soil fungi experiments aimed at more successfully re-establishing nursery-grown native plants into landscapes.

Center personnel have found that plant seedlings grown in the soilless medium often used by nurseries grow better and don't require as much fertilizer when inoculated with mycorrhizae, fungi that help them absorb more nutrients and water. Once some plants have been inoculated, they remain so, benefiting from the fungi throughout their lives and requiring less water and fertilizer. The fungi are also re-introduced into the soil, where other plants may benefit from them. □

## NEWS BRIEFS

**THE SUBJECT WAS BENTGRASS...**at the recent Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium in Milwaukee. **Dr. Joe Duich** advised seed buyers to make careful note of seed lot numbers and retain all records "to insure they get what they pay for." **Kevin Dushane**, superintendent at the Bloomfield Hills Country Club in Union Lake, Mich., said that, "golfers—principally lower handicap players—would like to have a fairway lie where the ball sits up on the turf. Mowing at 1/2-inch with a good stand of bentgrass can deliver that playing condition."

**FLOWER GUIDE...**A full-color 28-page booklet designed for the golf/landscape professional is being offered by the Professional Plant Growers Association. It contains valuable information on planning, planting and maintaining flowering annuals:

- a herbicide tolerance chart;
- a list of 63 popular flowering annuals with photos; and
- a chart describing each plant with regard to spacing, ease of maintenance, height, light, moisture and temperature requirements, degree of hardiness.

To order, send \$2 to: PPGA, P.O. Box 27517, Lansing, MI 48909.

**IN THE WORKS...**An "Envirotron" is in the works at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The structure, already approved by the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation Board of Directors, is a field laboratory with components for rootzone, greenhouse and other controlled environment features. The complete Envirotron will consist of 3,172 sq. ft. of phytotron, head, house, storage, wet laboratory, rhizotron with automatic retractable rain shelter, and living quarters. Funding for the \$700,000 project is expected to be completed by April 1.

**THE FUTURE IN VIDEO...**"Growing Futures," a career video, is soon to be released by the Green Industry Council of Sutton, Mass. Careers in landscape architecture, design and construction; interior landscaping; turf management; arboriculture; and nursery and greenhouse management are among those highlighted in the 18-minute video. "There is definitely a positive future," says **Byron Gechtel** in the video. To order the videotape, send \$49.95 to: Green Industry Council, P.O. Box 171, Sutton, MA 01590 or call Phyllis Gillespie at (508)476-3007. Along with the tape, you get a color poster and booklet on career opportunities and educational programs.