Natural turf is "king" in Bahrain

Grass may or may not be greener on the other side of the fence, but halfway around the world, in the nation of Bahrain, it's certainly more appreciated.

Growing quality turf is a stern test for a Mobile, AL, man who went to Bahrain about seven years ago as a vacationer and now serves as an advisor for turf sporting facilities on this

desert island.

Earl Stone, a soft-spoken golf architect, spends several months each year developing a golf course, a horse racing track, and world-class soccer pitches in tiny Bahrain, located just east of Saudi Arabia.

Quality turf can be grown in the desert, says Stone, but it's expensive. The biggest problem is water, not only its scarcity, but often its quality, Stone discovered while designing the country's first turf golf tees and greens at the prestigious Bahrain Equestrian & Horse Racing Club Golf Course.

Water for irrigation is scarce (Bahrain gets about two inches of rain annually), and it must be supplied by wells. But, with a pH of about 10 and a salinity of 2,000 parts per million of total dissolvable salt (ppm TDS) at the golf course Stone developed, the water isn't suitable for growing healthy grass.

Stone says the water is first diverted through a "pre-treatment" plant where sulfuric acid is added to reduce the pH (costing the government an estimated \$250,000 annually). Then the water goes to a reverse-osmosis desalination plant which, when the membranes are new, drops the ppm TDS to about 900. Constant attention must be given to the plant because of the corrosive effect of the salt water on the membranes which normally last about two years. As the membranes deteriorate, the salinity of the water rises.

This past winter the water registered 1,000 ppm TDS, a level usually considered too high for growing healthy turf.

"We feel like we're getting away with this level because of the leaching effect of the sand," Stone points out. "We were watering 1/2 inch daily and we feel the salt is leaching right through the root zone."

Sometimes even getting the turf to the site is a major undertaking. In building the country's first grass tees and greens (Bahrain has two other golf courses but they're entirely sand), stolons of Tifton 419 Bermudagrass from Mississippi Grass Nursery, Hattiesburg, MS, were refrigerated and air-freighted to the course.

Bermudagrass, even though it goes dormant because of shortened winter days, is the favored turf for most playing surfaces on the island, including the new soccer pitches Stone is overseeing.

"The government hopes to have the best looking fields in the world for the 1986 Arabian Gulf Cup competition," Stone reports. It's a point of international pride for this small country that now boasts \$200 million in athletic facilities.

The Tifton 419 Bermudagrass soccer pitches are overseeded each November with Prelude, a turf-type perennial ryegrass marketed by Lofts Inc. Moderate winter temperatures (from about 50 degrees F. in the morning to 70 degrees F. in the afternoon) provide ideal conditions for the ryegrass, Stone says. Also, water quality in the area of the pitches is significantly better than in other parts of the

Natural turf's ability to survive the desert conditions could be signaling the end of Bahrain's dependence on synthetic turf soccer

'They're tearing out all the artificial surfaces," Stone reports "You can imagine the temperature on one of those pitches with artificial turf. (Summer temperatures of 110 F. are common in Bahrain). I can't imagine how they can stand to play on these things.'

How are residents of Bahrain reacting to the turf facilities?

Stone reports it's common to see golfers remove their shoes before stepping onto a green for a putt.



Turfgrass experts inspect 18th green at Bahrain Equestrian & Horse Racing Club Golf Course. Pictured (1 to r): Earl Stone, Dr. Tim Bowyer, Mohamed Ali Taha, Stan Cath, Dr. Jim Watson, and Barry Gregson.



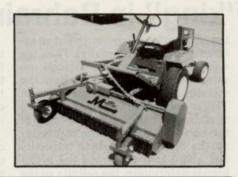
National Stadium in Manama, Bahrain, is planted in Tifton 419 Bermudagrass, overseeded with Prelude perennial ryegrass.

PRODUCTS

Vrisimo flail mower fits leading machines

Vrisimo Mfg., Inc., points to the adaptability and versatility of its new front mount flail mower, the Mighty Max FMS 160. The unit can be used with leading turf maintenance machines such as Toro, John Deere, Hustler, Turf Blazer, and Ransomes.

Vrisimo reports the FMS 160 can also be converted to a dethatching ma-



chine by simply changing the blades which cut with a vertical action and follow undulating ground contours.

In addition to the front mount FMS 160, the Mighty Max's 3-point hitch, PTO-powered, tractor-drawn models are also available for the grounds maintenance market. The basic Category 1 Mighty Max cutting widths are 46, 58, and 70 inches. The Super Category 1 has heavy-duty features and comes in cutting widths of 46, 58, 88, and 100 inches.

Circle 190 on Reader Inquiry Card



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Jobe's insecticide spikes for specific plants

Jobe's new insecticide spikes with fertilizer contain Di-Syston, a widely tested systemic insecticide. This is the first time Di-Syston has been used in a slow-release outdoor spike, the company says.

The new products-each formulated and sized for specific plants-include insecticide spikes for: trees, evergreen trees, young trees, roses, evergreen shrubs, and flowering shrubs. The spikes (tree insecticide spikes come 5 per package, the smaller shrub spikes 10) come in round cylinder containers that are safe and childproof.

Jobe's says the spikes, which are hammered into the ground, are safer and more convenient to use than traditional insecticides.



Circle No. 191 on Reader Inquiry Card

Kalo's Hydro-Wet granules help water find roots

A granular formulation of Hydro-Wet. a soil and turf wetting agent, is now available from Kalo, Inc.

Hydro-Wet works by modifying water's surface tension, allowing it to penetrate hard soil or dense thatch and reach plant roots. The product is recommended for groundskeepers and turf professionals who are looking for a way to drain excess moisture off turf without aerification on dry, hard-to-water areas.

Kalo reports the use of Hydro-Wet can reduce water use 30 to 50 percent. By increasing the efficiency of water, the wetting agent improves the efficacy of fertilizers and pesticides, making turf better able to resist fungus and other damaging diseases associated with excessive moisture. Hydro-Wet works in all soils and helps eliminate brown or bare spots, its manufacturer says.



Circle No. 192 on Reader Inquiry Card

National Mower announces new out-front reel unit

The 30FTN mower is a strong entry Circle No. 194 on Reader Inquiry Card

KEM ENTERPRISES, INC.

into the out-front reel mower market by National.

It features individual wheel clutches (located at the hand grips). adjustable handlebars, and hand-operated height adjustment. National is touting the maneuverability and low maintenance features of this mower which comes with front caster wheels and pneumatic turf tires.

The full-floating cutting unit of the 30FTN provides a 30-inch cutting width and follows ground contour without skip or scalping. It is powered by a 5-hp Briggs & Stratton, gear-reduction engine.

A large-capacity catcher is available as an option.



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Brouwer introduces large capacity vac

With a 350 cubic foot load box capacity, the new Brouwer Vac is designed for big jobs. It features a hydraulically operated suction head, floating head to follow contours, rear unloading gate, and is self unloading.

The unit can be towed by most 35 hp tractors equipped with 540 rpm PTO and travels on dual flotation tires for reduced compaction. The Brouwer Vac also offers an optional extension suction hose which allows for pick-up of litter and debris in hard to get spots.

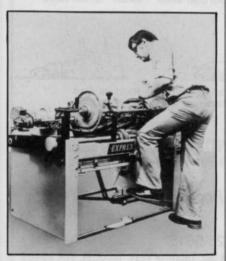


Circle No. 193 on Reader Inquiry Card

Reel mower sharpening machine made in England

A network of 45 distributors carry a British-made reel mower sharpener. The Express Dual automatic spin sharpening machine sharpens all types of reel mowers in under 20 minutes (domestic walk behind and greens trimming types in four minutes), according to Bernhard & Company LTD.

Wearing parts of the Express Dual carry a three year warranty, while the UL/CSA motors and electronic controls carry a 10 year unconditional warranty. The sharpening machine is backed up with six service centers in the U.S.



Circle No. 195 on Reader Inquiry Card

PETROVIC from page 42

pacted will not alleviate compaction.

Thatch development

There is little or no evidence to suggest that wetting agents reduce thatch accumulation.

In two long term studies of eight and 10 years (Murray and Juska, 1977; Engle and Alderfer, 1967), it was found that wetting agents had either no effect on or a slight increase in thatch accumulation.

Adding a wetting agent to an existing site which is already heavily compacted will not alleviate compaction.

More recent work at Cornell University by Dr. Richard Smiley has also shown no effect of wetting agents on thatch development.

Enhancing efficiency

Wetting agents obviously can have a major impact on water efficiency where LDS occurs. On wettable soils, it has been shown recently by Dr. Robert Shearman of the University of Nebraska that the evapotranspiration rates (ET) of turfgrass were reduced by as much as 25 percent by wetting agents, when water was not limiting.

Work done by Mark J. Carroll and this author at Cornell University suggests that the reduction in water loss (ET) or a saving on water was a result of having less water available for transpiration because of the greater loss of free water to drainage.

This would indicate that wetting agents would probably not improve the water use efficiency (the amount of water needed to produce a given amount of dry clippings) of turfgrass if they just reduced the amount of water available for transpiration.

Wetting agents have a useful place as one of the tools available to turfgrass managers. As more and more is learned about the benefits and shortcomings of wetting agents for turfgrass, refinement in application strategies can be made for the benefit of those who may decide to incorporate them into their turfgrass management regime.

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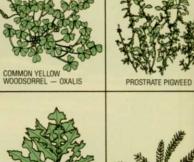


























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ALCA Advanced Landscape Supervisor Workshop, Aug. 16-17, Hyatt Oak Brook, Chicago, IL. Contact ALCA office, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA 22046. (703) 241-4004.

ALCA Landscape Supervisor's Workshop, Aug. 23-24, Marriott LaGuardia, NY. Contact ALCA office, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA 22046. (703) 241-4004.

SEPTEMBER

International Garden Horticultural Industry Association Convention and Exposition, Sept. 3-7, Louisville Convention Center, KY. Contact LeRoy Rench, IGHIA, 26 Pine St., Dover, DE 19901. (302) 736-6781.

Advanced Interior Maintenance Technician Short Course, Sept. 7, Airport Hilton, Atlanta. Contact ALCA office, 405 N. Washington St., Falls Church, VA 22046. (703) 241-4004.

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