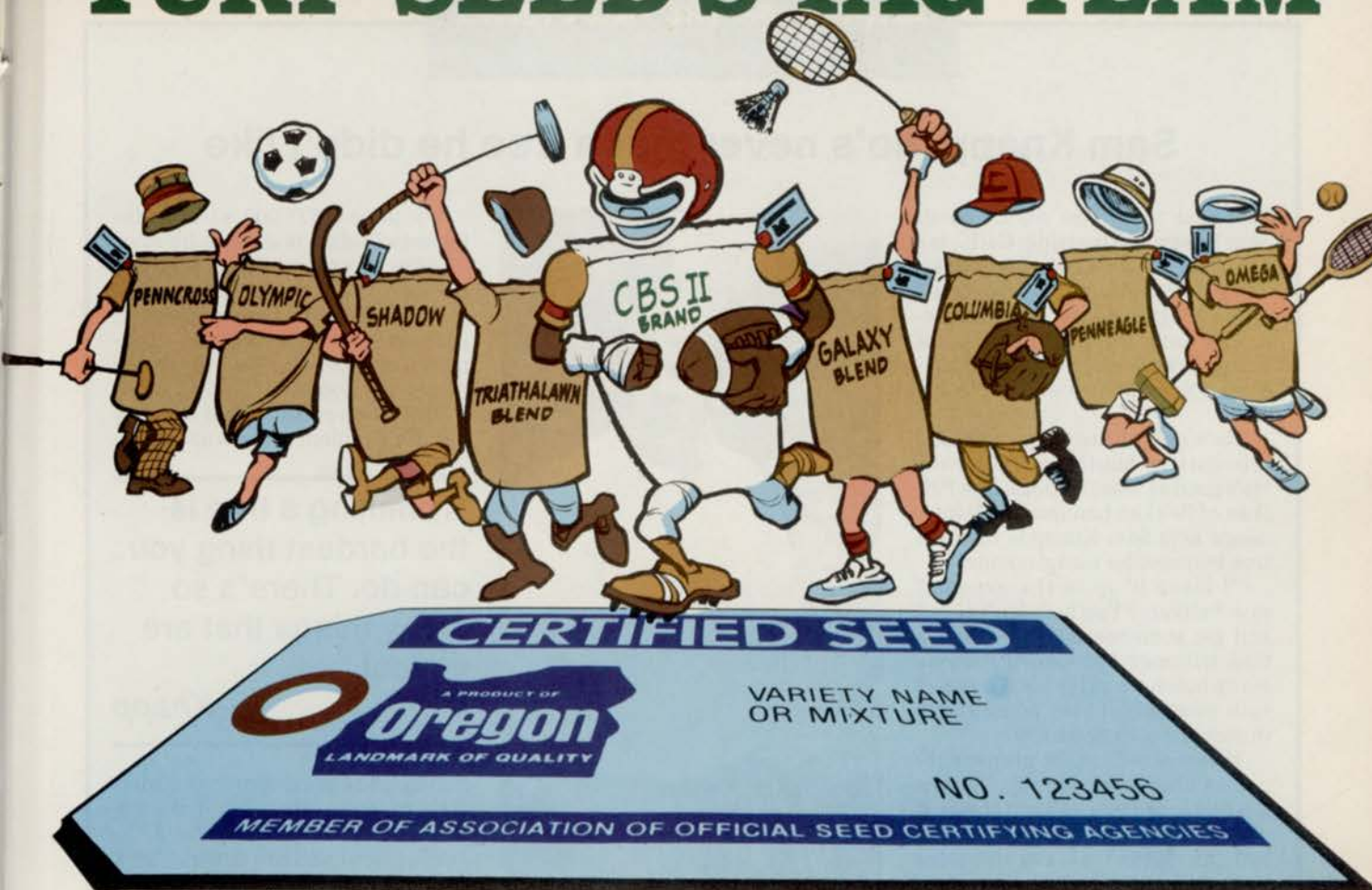


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Sam Knapp: he's never met a tree he didn't like

The first thing you notice about Sam Knapp of Riverside, Calif., is a piercing set of baby blue eyes. They don't miss much, especially when there's a tree in sight. Because Sam Knapp, operator of Knapp Tree Service in Riverside, is a man who knows and loves his trees.

He's one of just three certified arborists in Southern California. He's good at what he does. Bob Pelikan of Pelikan Landscape Maintenance says Sam Knapp is the lone tree trimmer he recommends.

"I leave it up to the experts," says Pelikan. "You just don't go out and get someone who says he's a tree trimmer because there's so many butchers out there. They just ruin trees. I feel very comfortable in recommending Sam."

If you hire Sam, be prepared to pay an above-average rate. Sam is the first to tell you he's not cheap. If you want him to make the initial call (he doesn't do estimates for free), it'll cost you \$25. The price rises to \$75 per hour for diagnostic counselling and consulting.

Earlier this year, a Riverside property management firm called for bids on a job where extensive tree work was needed. Sam's bid of \$16,000 was twice the bid accepted. "I tell the people straight up that I'm not cheap," says Sam, who drives a BMW.

"I don't give a bid for free, and I charge for every estimate. It's all over town: Sam thinks he's a doctor. It's true. I think it's a complement," he says with an ornery grin that deepens his ruddy complexion.

Simple approach

His approach to bidding is simple: don't call me unless you're serious about receiving the best service available. "I tell them 'don't waste my time and don't waste yours.' You'll find a dozen people in Riverside who love me," he says, not mentioning how the others feel.

Despite the showmanship, Sam Knapp is a likeable guy with a quick smile and a way of putting one at ease. He seems to have a saying for every situation. One of his favorites is "green begets green," which he says aptly describes much of Southern California.

But not necessarily Riverside. Many of Sam's accounts are located in affluent Orange County, where, he says, people are more willing to put up the "green." In other areas, the opposite is true.

"Not everyone is willing to spend the money (for tree care). Most don't allow a budget for it," he says. "Part of my job is to educate these people. Some think I'm there for my own pocket and I am—but I want to help their trees." In California, where an exotic palm carries an



Sam Knapp on a consultation call in Perris, Calif.

exotic price of \$25,000, a tree maintenance budget is a must, he says.

Sam says he works mainly through the large property management firms of Orange County, performing his specialty on apartments and condos. He also works on private homes.

But he gives back what he takes out. He's seldom refuses an invita-

'Trimming a tree is the hardest thing you can do. There's so many things that are critical.'

—Knapp

tion to speak at a seminar or garden club meeting. He's fair with his employees. They make from \$7 to \$15 per hour and are covered by a full medical plan. They have an extended production meeting each week where ideas for improving efficiency are discussed and then implemented. He listens to their suggestions.

It's a reward for what he considers hard work. "Trimming a tree is the hardest thing you can do. There's so many things that are critical," he says, adding that in an industry where there are good and bad artists, his are exceptional.

Overplanting

He sees overplanting as a major problem in the "now" society of Southern California.

"People here want an immediate affect," he says. "They overplant, don't institute a management program, don't remove as needed, and the results are usually disastrous." He sees the problem deepening as youthful California matures and housing increases.

He says another area of concern is the trend toward cool-season foliage, plants that need special care in Southern California. Most aren't aware of the subtleties involved in raising such plants.

"With our summers, you have to be careful with whatever you plant. We've adapted our treatment," he says, to mesh with the unique climate. He says he treats trees in desert-like Riverside County different from those in Orange County.

But he treats them all with respect. "A lot of clients I deal with tell me, 'we bought the house because of the trees.' Trees take a lifetime to come into existence, and I think people are respecting that more and more."

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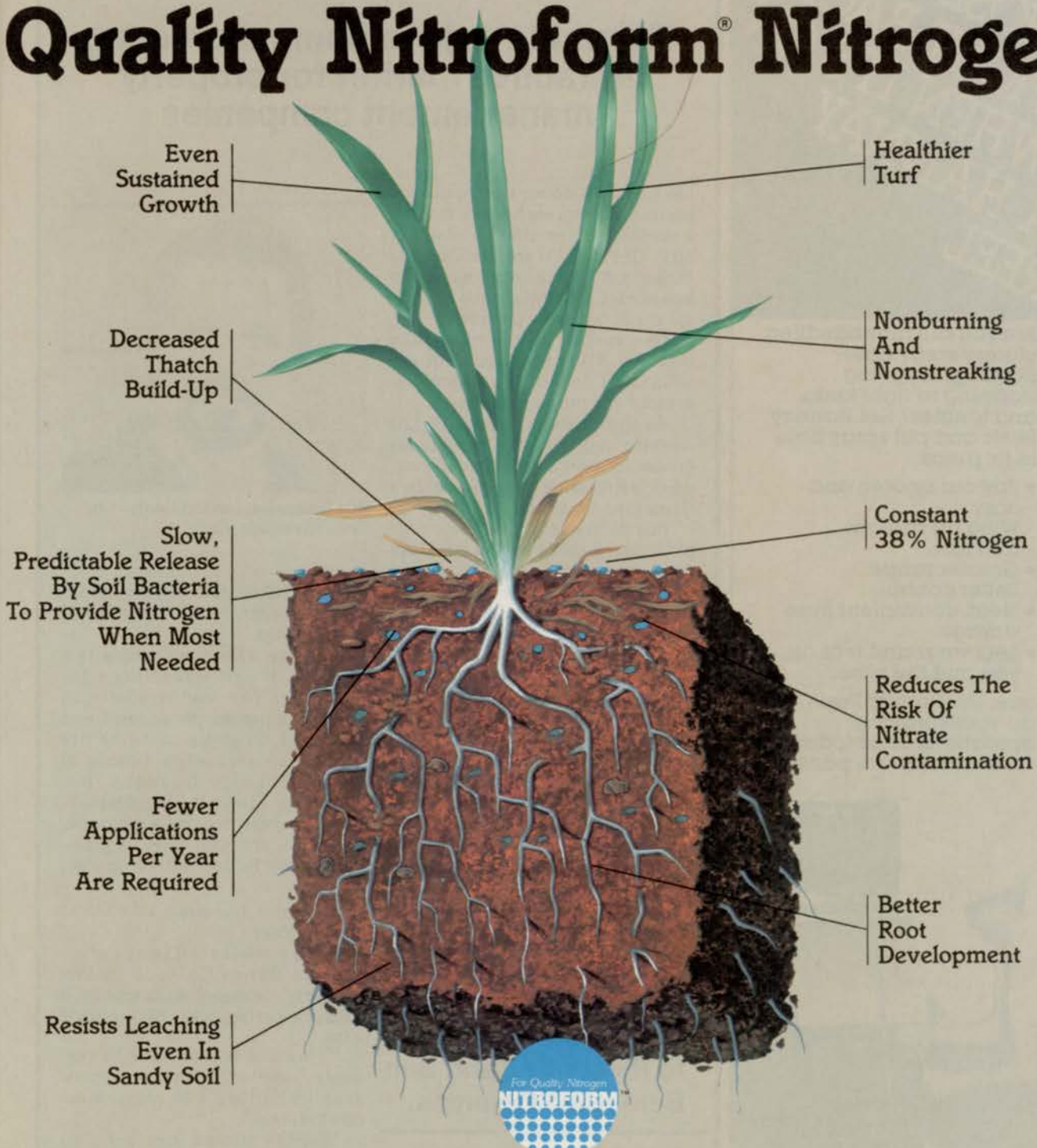
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Living on the Riverside

continued

Riverside's development creating attractive market for property management companies

Joe Gonzales doesn't calculate the hours he labors each week making a success of Riverside's Jordan Realty. "If I did, I'd realize I'm only making \$3 an hour," says the bearded California native, who serves as company president.

He's making a little more than that. For Riverside, ripe with development dollars, is an excellent area for the property manager.

As the property values in Los Angeles and Orange Counties increase, look for an even greater exodus to Riverside and adjacent San Bernadino Counties.

Just the thought of all those people brings a smile to Gonzales' tan face.

The largest development he manages is 136 units but look for that figure to increase as the company grows.

Jordan Realty is involved almost exclusively in property management. The company manages 20 homeowner associations in greater Riverside. "We don't deal in sales although we're licensed to sell. We don't though, because it can be a conflict of interest," says Gonzales.

As the property values in Los Angeles and Orange Counties increase, look for an even greater exodus to Riverside...and San Bernadino Counties.

He says very few realty companies are exclusively into property management but "we have our competitors."

For Joe Gonzales the time he spends at homeowner association board meetings, sometimes two in one night, is well worth it.

"I meet with each of them once a month," he says, noting communi-



Joe Gonzales, Jordan Realty Co. Inc., Riverside, Calif.

cation is paramount to a good property manager/homeowner board relationship.

Dealing with associations is a relatively new experience for Gonzales. The Vietnam veteran worked in newspaper ad sales, and boat and cigarette sales before gaining his real estate license in 1979. He joined Jordan Realty, then headed by Elwyn P. "Bud" Jordan, the same year, became a partner in July 1984, and took over as president when Jordan retired on Dec. 31, 1984.

Gonzales has since taken on a new partner.

Meanwhile, Riverside's Weldon Brown Co. Inc., another property management company, is also prospering in the high-growth area.

"This is a growth area in real estate," says company vice-president Jim Furlong, a 30-year real estate veteran.

Weldon Brown has been in property management for 20 years, servicing Riverside and surrounding areas.

"This is a good business to be in right now because of the large amount of investment money in the area," says Furlong. In the future, he says, "there's going to a need for more good management firms." □

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Shade Tolerant Turfgrasses

Finding a turf that prospers both in sunlight and shade can be a problem. However, more turf varieties with greater shade tolerance are being developed, making for an easier fight against what could be a major problem in the future.

by Dr. Leah A. Brillman

Trees and shrubs are an essential part of our landscapes, yet they can create problems for the other essential part, our turf areas.

The primary problem created by trees is shade, but contributory factors to poor turf performance are competition for nutrients and water by tree roots, increased humidity due to restricted air flow, which may contribute to increased disease activity, and accumulation of leaves on the turf, causing light exclusion.

Management practices of the turf and/or trees such as raising the cutting height, reducing nitrogen fertilization of the turf, root pruning, trimming lower tree limbs, and infrequent but deep irrigation, can improve turf performance in shaded situations, but proper choice of the species or variety of grass is necessary for long-term survival.

Critical factors to turf survival appear to be the ability to photosynthesize sufficiently under reduced light intensities to provide sufficient carbohydrates for good tillering and root growth, and resistance to diseases, especially powdery mildew and melting out or leaf spot.

Improved shade tolerance

Bluegrass is the preferred turf species in much of the cool-season area of the U.S. Most varieties are best adapted to full sun but certain varieties with improved shade tolerance have been developed.

Selection for improved powdery mildew resistance has been an important part of breeding for shade tolerance. Varieties that have shown improved powdery mildew resistance in various tests include Eclipse,

Glade, Ram I, A-34, Bristol, Mystic, Welcome, Nugget, America, Edmundi, Sydsport, Aquilla, Able I, and Harmony.

Some of these varieties appear to possess vertical resistance, determined by one or a few genes, so when different races of the powdery mildew develop, they may become infected.



Certain varieties, such as Aquilla, Mystic, Ram I, and Welcome appear to have horizontal resistance, determined by a complex of genes, and may thus maintain resistance better to different pathogenic races (Furler et al, 1982a).

Other studies have shown that resistance to leaf spot incited by *Bipolaris sorokiniana* (*Helminthosporium sativum*) and/or melting-out incited by *Drechslera poae* (*Helminthosporium vagans*) may be important to survival in certain shade situations.

Vargas and Beard (1981) demonstrated the importance of evaluating melting-out resistance in the shade

and sun because only two varieties of bluegrass, A-34 and Nugget, out of 18 tested, demonstrated resistance in both shade and sun. Disease resistance in full sun cannot be extrapolated to shade.

A serious problem?

It also appears that necrotic ring spot or Fusarium blight syndrome, caused by *Leptosphaeria korrae*, may be more severe in shade situations.

Screening trials are underway in many areas of the country to determine which varieties of bluegrass have resistance to this disease, which has recently been reported for the first time in many areas of the country and may become a more serious problem in the future.

Karnok and Augustin (1981) demonstrated that Glade exhibited a higher rate of photosynthesis under reduced light than Merion. Glade maintained a more favorable carbon level in the shade, thus allowing for greater shoot growth. This ability to photosynthesize under reduced light levels is critical to long-term shade survival.

Bluegrass varieties that have demonstrated improved shade tolerance in various tests around the country include Eclipse, Glade, Ram I, A-34, Bristol, Nugget, America, and Edmundi.

The blends

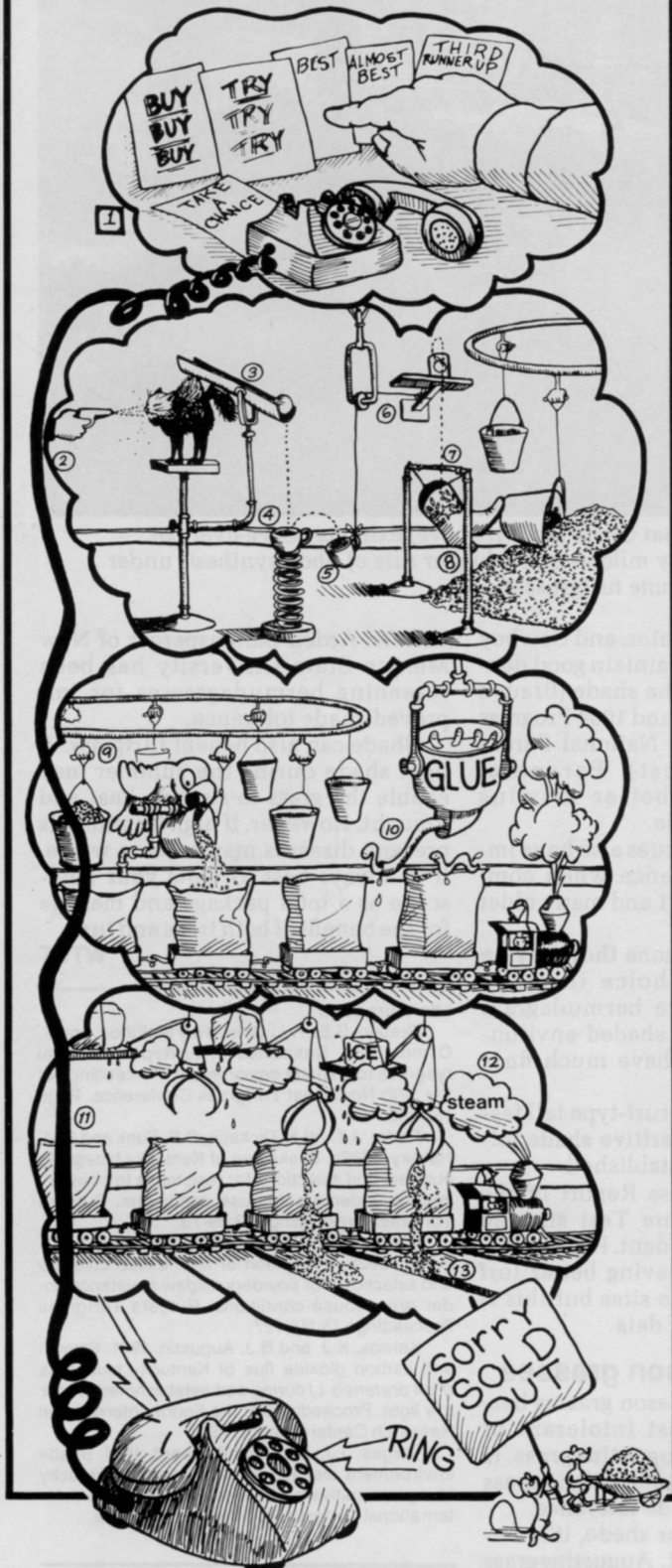
A number of newly-released and experimental varieties have also shown improved shade tolerance, an important selection criterion. A shade tolerant variety adapted to your area is an important part of every bluegrass blend.

Red fescues are often added to blends that are intended for shade areas. In general, the fine fescues are

Dr. Leah A. Brillman is research director, Jacklin Seed Co.

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known for shade tolerance and the ability to tolerate the acidic, infertile soils as well as tree root competition present in many shaded conditions.

The fine leaf fescues vary widely in their resistance to powdery mildew and leaf spot, which can cause damage in the shade.

However, instead of specifying varieties with resistance, common red fescue is usually placed in "shade" blends. Generally it has been found that the strong creeping red fescues have the best powdery mildew resistance, followed by the slender creeping red fescues, hard fescues, and chewings fescues.

Varieties that have shown improved tolerance to powdery mildew for their respective species include Fortress, Ruby, Commodore, Flyer, Pernille, Robot, Estica, Boreal, and Dawson creeping red fescue; Biljart, Reliant, Scaldis, Waldina, Spartan, and Aurora hard fescue; and Shadow chewings fescues (Furler et al. 1982b and 1984 Progress Report of the 1983 National Fine Fescue Test).

The sheep fescues have also demonstrated shade tolerance but are more suited to low-maintenance turf. Bighorn is a new variety of this species which has shown good shade tolerance. As the National Fine Fescue Test-1983 progresses, additional information on improved shade tolerance should be available.

Poa trivialis, rough bluegrass, is perhaps the species best adapted to moist, shaded sites.

However, in sunny sites it is a weed in other turfgrass species, thin and brown in the summer. It germinates rapidly and flourishes during cool, moist periods but is not compatible in blends with Kentucky bluegrass, fine fescues, and perennial ryegrass for permanent turf.

Sabre is an improved variety with a darker green color and greater density. It is best utilized as a specialty grass for overseeding in the south and for adapted sites in northern areas. It should not be spread into existing turf in other areas.

Perennial ryegrasses

Turf-type perennial ryegrasses have shown improved shade tolerance when compared to the older common types.

Previously useful as a temporary grass from fall to spring in sites shaded by deciduous trees, certain newer varieties have shown the ability to maintain good density and persist in shaded environments.

Tests in a densely shaded site at Everett, Wash., have shown Elka, Palmer, Pennant, Yorktown II, Repell,



Tests have shown that *Glade* (shown above) exhibits above-average resistance to powdery mildew and a higher rate of photosynthesis under reduced light than some turfgrasses.

All*Star, Birdie II, Gator, and Cowboy have the ability to maintain good density and quality in the shade (Brauen et al. 1983, and 1983 and 1984 Progress Reports of the 1982 National Perennial Ryegrass Test). Perennial ryegrasses have better mowing qualities in the shade.

Turf-type tall fescues also have improved shade tolerance when compared to Kentucky 31 and many older varieties.

In the transition zone they may be the turfgrass of choice in many shaded areas where bermudagrass will not survive. In shaded environments, tall fescues have much finer and softer leaves.

Since most of the turf-type tall fescues are new, comparative shade tolerance is not well established.

The 1984 Progress Report of the National Tall Fescue Test showed Arid, Finelawn I, Trident, Pacer, Mustang, and Apache having better turf quality at four shade sites but this is only the first year of data.

The warm-season grasses

Among the warm-season grasses bermudagrass is almost intolerant of shade while St. Augustinegrass is very shade tolerant, and zoysia grass shows moderate shade tolerance.

Whether in sun or shade, it is important to select a St. Augustinegrass with improved resistance to St. Augustine decline (SAD) and insects if you have a problem in those areas.

Floraturf bermudagrass has been reported to be more shade tolerant

and Dr. Arden Baltensperger of New Mexico State University has been screening bermudagrasses for improved shade tolerance.

Shade can also benefit turfgrass. A light shade during the summer may enable the grass to survive heat and drought. However, if high humidity is present, diseases may become worse. It is always best to view your landscape as a total package and manage for the benefit of both trees and turf.

WT&T

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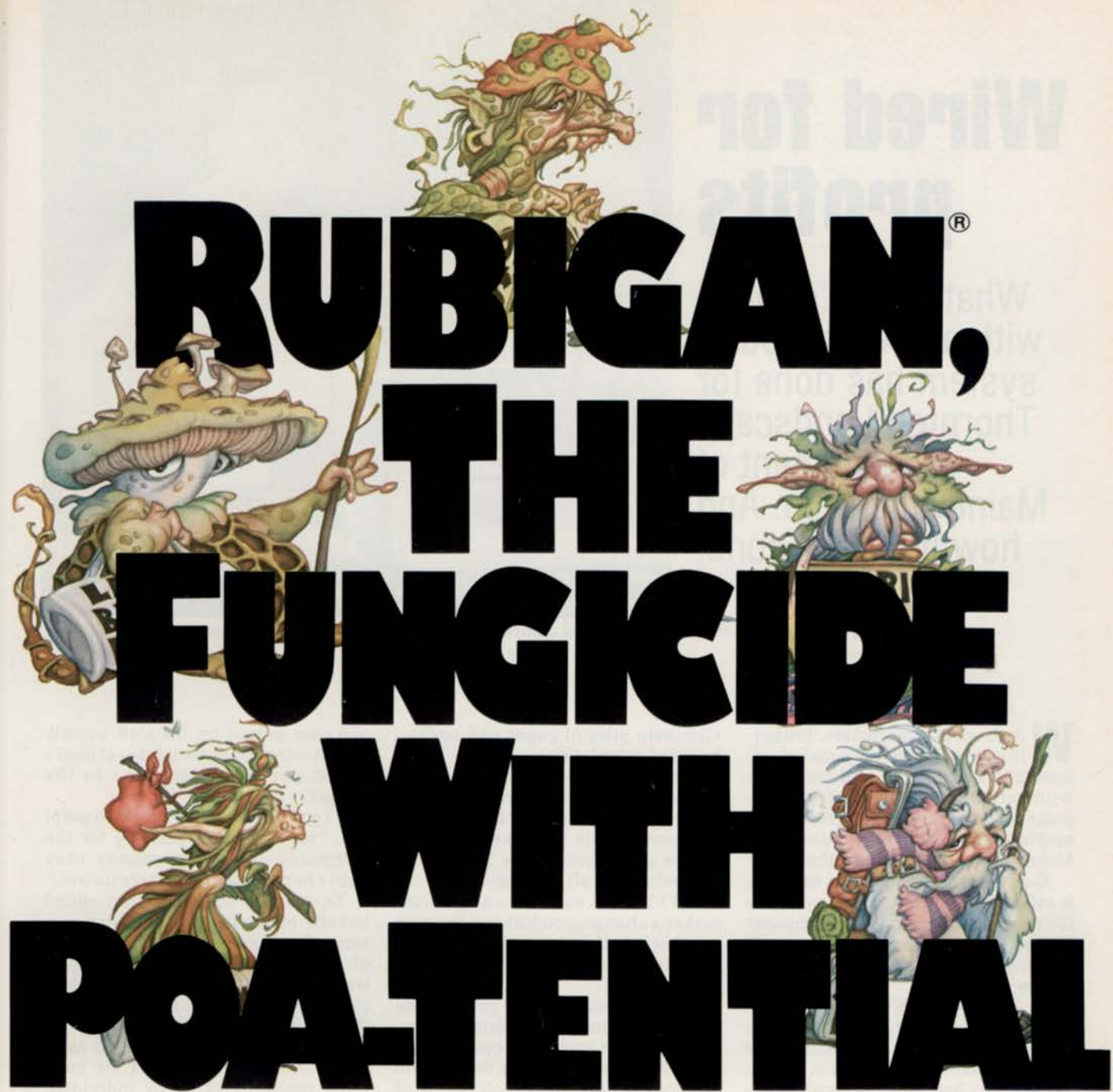
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To request copies of the results of the National Turfgrass Tests write to Kevin N. Morris, technical coordinator, National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), USDA-ARS, Beltsville Agriculture Research Center-West, Bldg. 001, Room 328, Beltsville, Md. 20705.



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Wired for profits

What going 'on-line' with a new computer system has done for Thornton Landscape Management of Maineville, Ohio. And how it's been done.



by Jerry Roche, editor **Nettling and Thornton with part of the Slice Computer System**

Wires, wires everywhere. Slithering through wood-paneled offices like a family of pythons. Each with millions of tiny electrical impulses carrying vital information to employees of Thornton Landscape Management, Maineville, Ohio.

Gary Thornton, son of the founder, is asked where the business would be today without an effective computer system. "I don't know," he answers, shaking his head. "But certainly not where we are."

In 1979 Thornton and then newly-appointed computer specialist Randy Nettling, noting that the business was growing faster than Gary's father, William Sr., had ever imagined, began seeking the perfect computer system.

"The closest we could find was a general contracting program," Nettling admits. "Using that program, we found ourselves needing functions we didn't have, and we were also repeating ourselves."

The next step was to develop their own system. Slice (acronym for System of Landscape/nursery Information Control and Estimating) was born.

The landscape contracting and management systems each contain accounts receivable, job costing, estimating and job control, inventory control, purchasing, accounts payable, and general ledger functions. Yet they are two separate systems.

The biggest time-saver, Nettling has found, is with the job costing and estimating functions, both of which

eliminate piles of paper and endless hours of calculations.

"By hand, you tend to make mistakes, transpose numbers," says Nettling. "Then, for each time the customer wants to make a change, you've got to insert new figures and compute them all over again.

"With Slice, each time a customer makes a change, you just pop the new number into the computer and within a matter of 30 seconds you've got a new proposal."

Using a letter-quality printer, the program generates complete bid proposals, which include a cover letter, individualized schedules, description of services, terms and conditions of the contract, and the contract itself.

How large?

How large does a landscape business have to be to consider purchasing a computer?

"There's not an answer to that," says Thornton. "The very smallest businesses can use a computer, even if they're only using it as a word processor. But to justify a complete system, they should be doing a couple hundred thousand dollars a year in business.

"Any business that's growing should be able to afford a computer because it's cheaper than even the cheapest labor."

Nettling observes that a good computer can be purchased with payments of \$400 to \$500 per month, but

one new person on the staff usually means—including benefits—at least a \$1,000 per month addition to the budget.

"Too," Thornton is quick to point out, "we've had people pay for the computer out of the money they didn't have to pay for an accountant."

Equipment tracking is an added benefit of landscape computer systems, the pair says. Each piece or type of equipment in inventory can be tracked for maintenance, and issued a cost-per-hour figure, used in buying decisions and job estimating.

"We track our equipment by category," Nettling says, "but we have some people tracking by individual piece. That way, you can come up with a competitive analysis. Plus, you should be able to determine whether you want to buy new equipment or continue to repair it after, say, five years."

Slice is unique in that it is not modeled after the old data processing divisions used by many businesses as little as five to ten years ago.

"We wanted a system that would be sitting on the desk and that would allow everybody to do their thing on the computer," says Thornton. "We are now on equipment that allows us to do that. Our system isn't a data processing department; the processing is distributed out to the people."

All business programs have general ledger functions, which Nettling says can help a business grow faster and