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AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Players' wish: that the World Series be played on real turf

"They prefer grass."

With that statement, Philadelphia Phillies groundskeeper Ralph Frangipane pretty much sums up the feeling of Major League Baseball players.

What the players *like* and what they *get*, though, don't always agree—witness the 1993 World Series, which was played on two synthetic turf fields.

Frangipane is a turfgrass guy from way back—1951, to be exact. The career of his Toronto Blue Jays' counterpart, Brad Bujold, dates back to Exhibition Stadium, but that also featured synthetic turf.

"I really can't compare one against the other," Bujold tells us. "But we have run into some unique problems with artificial turf.

"For instance, everything shows up. If you watch a game on television, when it rains, you get the water stains; when players spit chewing tobacco, it stains the carpet. Chewing gum gets spit on the field, stepped on, and then you've got to freeze it and try to chip it off."

Frangipane is from the old school.

"On synthetic turf, baseball is a totally different game," he says. "You have a faster infield, the ball moves faster, it's rougher physically on the athletes. When you bunt, the ball moves faster and it gives the infielders an opportunity to get to the ball quicker."

Frangipane hopes he doesn't have to put up with synthetic turf much longer.

"There's definitely talk about going back to grass," he notes. "Lately, the papers have picked up on it. What happens is that—when we convert to football—we have to dig out second and third and put Astroturf on those bases. You're using two different types of Astroturf that have different textures, and the seams in some places are not perfectly even and might have a tendency to trip players. So that's the big beef.

"The Eagles have been complaining about it. They're out there right now lim-

bering up, but they can't have a full practice on Astroturf every day because they get leg splints and all that. They just limber up there, and then they go to a grass field to run their plays."

Bujold has some of the same problems, despite different uses for the Skydome field.

"Here, the stands have to rotate for football. In order to do that, you have to get the turf out of the way so the stands can go over the tracks," Bujold says. "Here, the artificial turf gets rolled up into large rolls (for conventions, etc.). So the seams—the zippers—that join the pieces of turf together get worn out."

Despite the problems inherent in synthetic turf fields, the number one consideration is consistency.

"I haven't had any complaints from the players themselves about the field," Bujold continues. "We try to be consistent so that, when a team *does* go out there, there are no surprises. That will go for the pitcher's mound, dirt areas, batter's boxes—whatever. It has to be consistent."

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT congratulates Frangipane, Bujold and other synthetic turf managers for all the special problems they have. We only wish that more field owners saw things differently. However, natural grass fields are catching on again, just like old times. Royals Stadium and Faurot Field at the University of Missouri, we hear, will become the two newest converts to natural grass (see "LM Grape-vine").

Certainly, if the Phillies and Blue Jays had their way, they would have been playing on real grass, too.

Jerry Roche

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NOVEMBER 1993 VOL. 32, NO. 11

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12 Using perennials for 'custom jobs'

Commercial accounts are discovering what homeowners already know: perennials make landscapes distinctive. LM visited landscapers who provide this service.

Ron Hall

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The industry's best spreaders cover large areas and carry heavy loads of fertilizer, chemicals or topdressing. Whether designed for pick-up trucks or hitches, this is an invaluable equipment category.

compiled by Terry McIver

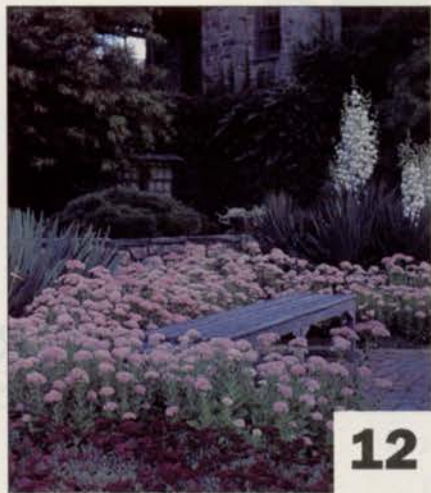
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If it's high time to go shopping for a new truck or three, make sure you know what your dealer can offer. Most manufacturers are offering special buying incentives, too.

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Chemicals, irrigation systems and equipment must be carefully prepared to cope with sub-freezing temperatures in the northern U.S.



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By understanding the properties of soil texture classes, you are better able to develop management strategies best suited to soil limitations.

Charles H. Darrah III, Ph.

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38 Specialized equipment

Here are some concepts to consider when hunting for that 'dream machine' that does exactly what you want it to do.

Steve and Suz Trusty

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42 A million elms

A relatively new type of disease-resistant American elm is replacing those lost to Dutch elm disease on golf courses and landscapes. Goal of the Elm Research Institute is to have one million planted by the year 2000.

43 Seed harvest: 'fair'

This year's seed harvest reaps modest yields. Weather conditions see-sawed from heavy rain to oppressive heat. During one hot spell the crop was near ruin.

Terry McIver

46 Gypsum saves water

Substantial savings are being chalked up to small gypsum blocks that measure moisture content. The Texas Ag Extension Service is investigating the idea, which has the potential to save thousands of dollars and millions of gallons of water annually.

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

27 State of the lawn care industry

● **Chemical lawn care sales flat; allied services boom:** 1,000 surveys mailed, 221 returned; service 'mix' appears to be swinging slightly, toward add-ons; speculation that customer base eroded because of the economy.

Jerry Roche

● **Update: combined TruGreen/ChemLawn operations on fast track:** President Don Karnes and a lean management team steer the industry leader toward support of branch operations and field specialists.

Ron Hall

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● **Losing the focus of lawn care sales:** An adversarial attitude becomes apparent to customers when they ask a technician a few questions and receive nothing but a one-word answer. And this guarantees one thing: the company will lose.

Ed Wandtke

● **Labor problems cropping up all over:** Most eligible labor lacks trainability, commitment, work ethic, according to our survey. Compiled by the LM editorial staff.

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Aerial photo of a beautiful residential landscape courtesy of Gary Kinman, Kinman & Associates, Dublin, Ohio.

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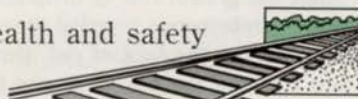
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ASK THE EXPERT

DR. BALAKRISHNA RAO

Red thread varieties differ

Problem: I understand that Bayleton can control red thread disease. Does this mean that it will control both the newly-described red thread—*Laetisaria fuciformis*—and pink patch (*Limonomyces roseipellis*), or will it control the old-name red thread (*Corticium fuciforme*)? (Pa.)

Solution: Reports indicate that Bayleton will control the red thread disease caused by *Laetisaria fuciformis* (new name) or *Corticium fuciforme* (old name). It will not control pink patch caused by *Limonomyces roseipellis* (new name).

Therefore, to properly manage these problems, it is important to identify the disease first. The following discussion may help you diagnose these two newly-described diseases.

Recently, turfgrass pathologists renamed red thread disease caused by *Corticium fuciforme* (old name) into pink patch (*Limonomyces roseipellis*) and red thread (*Laetisaria fuciformis*). Both these agents can affect *Lolium sp.* and *Fertuca sp.*, but only red thread is reported to affect *Agrostis sp.* and *Poa sp.*

Pink patch spreads slower than red thread; therefore, it will be less severe and won't affect the growth rate of turfgrass. Leaves will be covered with pink, membranous mycelial growth. Pink patch differs from red thread by the lack of red, thread-like mycelial growth on leaf tips and the pink, cottony flocks of anthrocondidia. Because of this, it spreads slowly; therefore, often pink patch disease can be managed by cultural practices such as proper mowing and feeding programs.

The red thread disease can be prevalent during spring and autumn on slow-growing, nitrogen-deficient turf. The fungal agent kills the affected blades and then pink- or reddish-colored threads protrude from the tip of the leaves. When the disease is active following humid weather, the diseased areas appear reddish-brown. If the disease is severe, provide adequate supplemental nutrients in addition to fungicides.

Big-eyed bugs vs. the chinch

Problem: I've heard of a big-eyed bug that feeds on chinch bugs. Would you please give me some hints on how to identify this insect? (Pa.)

Solution: Big-eyed bugs feed on chinch bugs and other insects found in turfgrass. Like chinch bugs, they are also thatch-inhabiting insects. In the United States, about 20 species of this predator insect exist. Big-eyed bugs can infest lawns and feed on all stages of chinch bugs and effectively reduce their population. Even though they may appear to feed on turfgrass, their major source of food is insects.

Adult chinch bugs and big-eyed bugs look similar in appearance. Use a 10x hand lens and study the following features for identification: The body of the chinch bug is narrow with a small, pointed, triangular-shaped head and small eyes. The body of the big-eyed bug is wider with a larger blunt head and two large prominent eyes. Big-eyed bugs move faster and are more active than chinch bugs. If you crush a chinch bug, it has an unpleasant odor.

Safest deicing chemicals

Problem: What kinds of deicing salts would be effective, inexpensive and safe to use around sidewalks and roads having landscape plants or street trees nearby? We are thinking about using urea. Is it a good idea? I appreciate your comments. (N.Y.)

Solution: Common deicing salts, sodium chloride (NaCl) and calcium chloride (CaCl₂) have freezing points, in solution, considerably below that of water. Sodium chloride has a minimal freezing temperature, in solution, of -21.2° C. and calcium chloride goes down to -55° C. Both salts also give off heat when dissolved in water but, because of the small amounts applied, the heating effect is negligible.

Calcium chloride is less toxic than sodium chloride but it is two to eight times more expensive. In addition, it readily absorbs moisture and cakes, making it difficult to apply. Calcium chloride's melting ability at low temperature is particularly important in areas where temperatures routinely drop below those where sodium chloride is effective.

We could find very little information concerning the use of urea as a deicing agent. One source suggested a rate of 1 lb. urea per 10 sq. ft. We tried both urea and sodium chloride at this rate and found sodium chloride to be noticeably more effective when the temperature was several degrees below freezing. Urea is supposedly most effective just below freezing.

Urea is less likely to injure plants than sodium chloride and causes less injury to metals and concrete. However, the lower effectiveness and higher cost may limit its use as an ice melter.

Abrasives such as sharp sand are sometimes used alone or in combination with salt. Their effectiveness has been questioned, however, since they have no melting power and may, in fact, insulate and contribute to ice build-up with additional precipitation.

In spite of the problems in using sodium chloride, the advantages apparently outweigh the disadvantages and it remains the most widely used chemical ice melter.

The practice of physically removing most snow and ice, then following up with judicious applications of sodium chloride, should help protect both plants and people.

Home study course in horticulture

A reader wrote to tell us of a home study course at the University of Guelph, Ontario.

It is a diploma program that offers study towards a degree in agriculture or horticulture. Areas of study include turfgrass management, landscape management, etc. Contact the University of Guelph, Independent Study, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1.

Dr. Balakrishna Rao is Manager of Research and Technical Development for the Davey Tree Co., Kent, Ohio.

Mail questions to "Ask the Expert," LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.