

# WISCONSIN TURFGRASS NEWS

VOL. XIII, NO. 2

SUMMER 1995

## DR. CHARLES KOVAL RETIRES

*By Monroe S. Miller*

Turfgrass producers all across Wisconsin will find their work changed with the recently announced retirement of Dr. Charles Koval. After thirty years on the University of Wisconsin-Madison staff, Dr. Koval will be leaving his faculty position in the Department of Entomology. He will be greatly missed by the industry that he has served so well for so long.

We have known him as a superb urban entomologist and as an articulate spokesman for the turfgrass industry. He also served as the director of all the agricultural experiment stations in Wisconsin, and after that was an associate dean in CALS, responsible for agricultural extension activities. He served as the chairman for the Department

of Entomology after that service. It may be that few are aware that for the past several years he has also had a position on the UW-Madison athletic board.

Dr. Koval is the last of the four faculty members who were involved in the establishment of the turfgrass management program at the UW-Madison. Professors Love, Worf and Newmann preceded him in retirement from the Madison faculty, leaving responsibilities for the program entirely in the hands of "second" generation staff members Kussow, Meyer and Rossi.

Individuals like Koval, who have become so well respected by an industry, can never be replaced. But our problems will remain and the need for a turfgrass entomologist will have to be addressed by CALS administration. They will have to search far and wide to find a person who will capture our confidence as Chuck Koval has. That search should begin immediately.

Fortunately, Chuck will maintain an office at the research facility and spend time on some projects that are particularly interesting to him and of value to us. For that we can be grateful. •

## The Best in the Midwest

*By Tom Schwab*

Before you know it Summer Field Day 1995 will be here. Summer hasn't even arrived yet, and I'm telling you to start planning to attend this event which, for me, has always marked the end of the season. You all know how fast our summers fly by, so this article is serving as a reminder to put August 15 on your calendar. Make time for this fun and educational day to spend with peers and see what information your research dollars have

uncovered.

There is an all new Summer Field Day (SFD) planning committee. Tom Harrison, who planned the previous 12 field days, decided to let the new group take over. The field day wouldn't be what it is without his dedication, so thank him when you get a chance. The new committee consists of Kendall Marquardt, Dick Beutel, Wayne Horman, Wayne Kussow, Frank

*(Continued on page 2)*



Dr. Koval was presented travel vouchers as retirement gifts from Wayne Horman & Mike Semler representing WTA & WGCSA.

# The Best in the Midwest

(Continued from page 1)

Rossi, Audra Anderson, Catherine Smejkal and myself.

One change I'd like to highlight is that the morning trade show will expand the time spent with exhibitors. At 10:00am, Wayne Horman (Wisconsin Turfgrass Association president) will give an introduction and present some surprise entertainment that you won't want to miss. He will also kick off the product and equipment introduction session. Each exhibitor may present education on one of its new innovations or just mention the products and services it provides. The trade show will then continue until lunch. We will also hold a fund raising putting contest on our management systems green in the morning.

The authentic auction is being replaced with a silent auction to give you more time to spend in the trade show. Already Kohler Co. has donated a model M16S 16 hp engine. The generous contributors to the auction last year are listed below. Their donations raised almost \$3,000 for turf research.

The main purpose of Summer Field Day, The Research Tour, begins after lunch. This year attendees will have a choice of participating in a tour geared

towards golf turf or towards landscape turf. This way you will visit fewer sites, get more specific information, and be able to ask more questions.

The quantity and quality of information is increasing every year as the facility matures. The field day planning committee is determined to make this the most memorable one yet. We'll see you on August 15 for the best, most information packed Summer Field Day ever. •



Huge crowd enjoying Field Day 1994



Dr Wayne Kussow awaits opening of Summer Field Day 1994

Agr-Evo	Horst	Mechanical Soil Tech	Scotts Pro Turf
American Sod	JW Turf	Miles Inc.	Spring Valley
The Anderson's	Jerry's Small Engine	Milorganite	Temporary Rain
Central WI Evergreens	Johnson & Assoc.	Pendelton	Tillman Nursery
Chipco	KEI	Pro Lawn	Town & Country
Ciba	Knox Fertilizer	Reinders	Turf Supply Co
EZ GO	LL Olds Seed	Reinders Irrigation	Tyler Enterprises
Greensmix	Lebanon Turf	Roberts Irrigation	Vigoro
Growmark	Lesco	Ryco Industries	Wisconsin Turf
Hanley	McKay Nursery	SCN Sales	North Shore CC

## FIELD DAY '95 HIGHLIGHTS

- \* Trade Show
- \* Equipment & Product Education
- \* Equipment Demonstration
- \* Putting Contest
- \* Great Lunch
- \* Silent Auction
- \* Research Tour



## Skin Cancer Prevention: It Could Save Your Life

by Henry Nehls-Lowe and Patrick Remington, MD, MPH  
Wisconsin Division of Health Madison, Wisconsin

Summer's bright sunshine brings out more than beautiful lawns and gardens. An increasing number of people are working and playing in the sun. Many of us are familiar with the discomfort of sunburn. But there is a looming cloud more ominous than sunburn, particularly among those of us who burn easily or work outdoors all day in the sun. It is skin cancer.

Each year an estimated 10,000 Wisconsinites are diagnosed with skin cancer. Skin cancers are the most common type of cancer and its rate increases each year. The most common type of cancer is basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma. Although these cancers are easily cured if treated early, they are still responsible for the deaths of several thousand Americans each year.

Of greatest concern is malignant melanoma skin cancer, because it can appear quickly and spread to other parts of the body. Fortunately melanoma is not as common as basal cell or squamous cell carcinomas. In

Wisconsin, about 300 persons are diagnosed with melanoma each year. However, the rate of melanoma is increasing at a rate of 3% to 4% per year, faster than any other cancer in humans. In Wisconsin, the death rate from melanoma appears to be increasing for men, but not for women.<sup>1</sup>

Excessive exposure to sunlight and fair skin are significant risk factors for all types of skin cancer (dark skinned individuals should also avoid excessive sunlight exposure). Halting unprotected exposure to sunlight will decrease your lifetime risk of skin cancer. It is very important for children to avoid severe sunburns because this is linked to melanoma developing during adulthood.

Wearing a hat and a long-sleeve shirt is the best way to keep the sun off your skin. Wide brimmed hats provide the best protection. Baseball-caps can provide good protection for the face, but leave the back of the neck exposed. Some baseball caps come with a loose piece of cloth that covers

the back of the neck. These caps were found to be practical and easy to use in a study of skin cancer prevention among farmers, conducted by the Marshfield Medical Research Foundation.

Sun screen lotions are very effective at filtering out ultraviolet light—the most damaging part of sunlight—for those parts of the skin that cannot be covered by clothing. Sun screen ratings between 0 and 15 allow a varying degree of tanning. A sun screen lotion with rating of 15 and above filters out almost all ultraviolet light. Sun screens should be applied liberally to any exposed skin and reapplied if washed off by water or heavy perspiration.

If you spend much time outdoors or are fair skinned, you should check your skin regularly for the appearance of skin lesions or mole-like growths. Also, you should regularly examine existing lesions and moles for changes in color or size. Consult your physician if you notice either of these or if you have concerns about skin cancer. •

*Editors note: Many of us, in the green industry, do not take the proper precautions to avoid sun exposure, self included. We work many hours outdoors in the summer. I asked a friend of mine to give some information on how we can better protect ourselves. If this article gets one of you to start thinking about exposure more, it was worth printing.*

# Prairies Add Numerous Benefits

By Andrea Powers, Junior Consultant, CRM Ecosystems, Inc.

Why on earth would one want to plant a prairie? The answers are many, and everyone has his or her own reason for restoring prairie. One thing is certain—native restoration is becoming one of the fastest growing trends in landscaping. Prairie restoration is no longer reserved for homeowners; settings now include school districts, golf courses, and corporate headquarters. There are many reasons to restore prairie and other native plant communities. Two of the most popular reasons are the environmental benefits and the positive public relations that are often generated.

Native plants provide the most natural habitat for all a species of wildlife. Birds, butterflies, deer, and other animals prefer the native areas for nesting sites and food. Prairie sod consists of extremely deep-rooted plants which offer another environmental bonus—erosion control. A quality prairie also has many diverse species present which provide the necessary nutrients for self fertilization, making fertilization inputs unnecessary.

Most of us cannot get enough favorable public relations. One of the quickest ways to boost your reputation is by promoting environmental awareness. Corporate parks, shopping malls, and golf courses are often criticized for too much expansion of lawn or cement. These expansions create little wildlife habitat or diversity to your landscape.

Adding a native planting to a landscape is one way to demonstrate your organization's commitment to conservation. Many schools are beginning to incorporate native plantings, which not only reduce maintenance costs over time, but provide a great educational tool for science, ecology students, and faculty.

How does one go about restoring a prairie? It is not as complex as many people seem to think. There are several steps to follow. The best advice is to make sure that the site is ready. There is nothing worse than rushing to plant before the weeds have been eliminated.

Most prairie plants are perennials which take several years to become fully developed. Therefore, if aggressive perennial weeds, such as quack grass, brome grass, Kentucky bluegrass, and Canada thistle are allowed to get a head start, the native species cannot compete. Naturally, once your prairie seed has been planted, it becomes more difficult to kill the weeds without killing the native species.

Start preparing your site by killing the existing vegetation with Round-Up, wait until it dies and till it under. Then wait a full growing season to watch which weeds come back. An area which appears to be weed-free may not turn out to be once the ground is disturbed. By waiting, you allow yourself a second chance to spray before you plant, and reduce your future maintenance costs.

"Fine," you say, "I understand,

and I'm willing to wait, but what about all those country club members who do not want to tolerate it?" There are ways to get around this common problem. Scattering biennial wildflower seed, such as black-eyed Susans, provides instant color at a reasonable price. If soil erosion is a concern, an annual cover crop of oats is also an option.

When it is time to plant, get advice from the nursery that provides your seed. They will tell you what you should buy to insure that you have the proper species in the correct ratios. Many prairie nurseries offer custom blended mixes. All that you need to know is the size of your area and the type of soil you are working with. Whether you have a true prairie area (full sun) or a woodland edge area, most nurseries will help you select the appropriate species.

For the first two to three years, weed control is crucial. During the first year, keep the area mowed at four to six inches. Make sure to collect the clippings so the weed seeds do not spread. Never pull weeds from a prairie. Disturbing the soil damages existing native seedlings and may expose more weed



The new prairie adds beauty to the Monroe Country Club.

## Prairies Add Numerous Benefits

(Continued from page 4)

seed. Mowing will prevent weeds from seeding into the restoration while allowing sunlight to reach the smaller developing natives. If perennial weeds appear, it may become necessary to treat them individually with a herbicide. Ideally, the ground preparation makes such measures unnecessary.

Once the prairie plants have established themselves, the restoration will be fairly easy to maintain. An occasional burn is often enough to keep weeds under control. It is important to know why you are conducting a

burn. If you need to eliminate brambles that have crept in, you burn at a different time than if you are trying to get the native grasses to flourish. A burn at the wrong time could actually aggravate the situation you are attempting to correct. It is best to consult an experienced professional before you burn in order to prevent such an error.

Many people are afraid to attempt a prairie restoration. The truth is, if the correct steps are followed, it is fairly easy to do. Most prairie restorations fail because people do not prepare

correctly before they plant and as a result, they are unable to control the weeds. The nursery I work for, CRM Ecosystems Inc., is so sure that every project can be successful that we offer our clients a guarantee.

A native plant community can add a new dimension to any existing landscape, and bring countless benefits with it. Year-round color displays and varied textures, wildlife, and a natural erosion control system are only a few of the things a restoration has to offer. •

---

## Is There Merit in Imidcloprid?

By Dr. Chuck Koval *Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Most of you already know that Merit is the trademarked name for imidcloprid, the first commercial representative of a new class of insecticides recently introduced by Miles Inc. Imidcloprid is the chemical name for the product now marketed as Marathon for greenhouse and nursery use and Merit is for insect control in turfgrass, landscape ornamentals and interior plantscapes.

Merit is a broad spectrum, systemic insecticide, effective against a number of soil-inhabiting turfgrass pests, including the black turfgrass *ataenius* and white grubs. It is also effective against a number of insect species (primarily sucking types) that are commonly associated with landscape plants. Its low toxicity to mammals coupled with demonstrated efficacy at extremely low use rates make this the lowest risk insecticide introduced for the turf market to date.

Merit offers a new dimension in soil insect control unavailable

to turf managers for many years. Basically, soil applications made just before, or at, egg hatch should effectively control the larvae of white grubs and black turfgrass *ataenius* for the season. Materials should be watered in thoroughly within 24 hours of application for maximum benefit. Expectations, based on the available data, are for approximately 80% control, usually more than sufficient to protect turf from soil insect damage in Wisconsin. However, this is not to suggest that every turf manager should apply the product when adult *ataenius* or June beetles are noted in the spring. Rather, if adult populations are unusually high, this is an option now available to managers.

A better strategy would be to note the level of beetle flight activity and maintain an aggressive monitoring program for the presence of larval activity. For black turfgrass *ataenius* in Wisconsin, this calls for regular soil inspections starting about June 10-15 most seasons. If larval

numbers exceed 20 per square foot, immediate treatment is suggested. Waiting until the turf exhibits wilt is too late for the application of Merit or any other material to be most effective. For best results, water, treat, and immediately water again.

When June beetle flights are excessively high, damage usually occurs the next summer. Again, monitoring can avoid potential loss due to grub feeding or due to damage by skunks feeding on the white grubs. Five or more June beetle grubs per square yard is all that is required to result in turf injury in Wisconsin.

Merit is a new tool added to the control package for turf managers. This product can complement the managers IPM goals while giving turf managers more flexibility in their insect pest management programs. •

*The Wisconsin Turfgrass News* is the official publication of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association edited by Monroe S. Miller and Tom Schwab

# New Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Laboratory Begins Operation This Season

*Julie R. Meyer, Extension Plant Pathologist*

A new diagnostic laboratory is now open to complement the existing Plant Pathogen Detection Clinic on the UW-Madison campus. The goal of the Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (TDDL) is to provide rapid, accurate, and specific disease diagnostic information and management recommendations to turfgrass growers.

Rapid and accurate diagnosis of emerging problems is important for turf managers, whether you are managing large areas of high-value, high-maintenance golf turf, grounds, fields, farms or lawns. Disease problems can spread quickly in turf and can often be difficult to diagnose. It is often particularly difficult to recognize if the problem is due to a pathogen, or if the cause is environmental or physical. Diagnosticians at the TDDL can provide expert, unbiased evaluations that will in many cases save you from the cost of and exposure to unneeded or ineffective pesticide applications.

The new TDDL will be housed in Room 285 Russell Labs in the Department of Plant Pathology. This location offers the best proximity to state-of-the-art microscopes, growth chambers, an extensive library and access to UW mycologists and other research specialists.

The new laboratory space and increased staff will allow turfgrass samples sent to the TDDL to be processed immediately. When you send your sample in, you will be contacted within a day to confirm arrival and to discuss the preliminary diagnosis. If the diagnosis requires longer to confirm, you will be contacted regularly with progress reports. Final diagnosis and management recommendations for commercial samples will be discussed by phone or by FAX.

The fee structure for the TDDL has been set at \$10.00 per sample

for homeowners, and \$25.00 per sample for commercial turf managers, including golf course, sod farms and commercial lawn care companies. The fee includes:

- visual diagnosis
- culturing for presence of pathogens
- microscopic examination
- disease management suggestions
- results for commercial samples returned by phone or FAX

Serological analysis is also available for *Pythium* or *Rhizoctonia* for \$25.00 per sample.

Members of the WTA receive a 20% discount on all services!

To ensure a good diagnosis, please consider the following guidelines:

1. Collect and submit a sample early in the week, especially if sending by mail. Do not send samples at the end of the week, or they sit undelivered during the weekend.

2. Send an adequate representation of the problem. If possible, send several samples where the disease is active and showing a continuum of symptoms, from healthy to severely diseased.

3. A 6-inch plug is a good size to submit. Include the roots. Plugs taken with a cup cutter are ideal. Samples taken with a soil probe are too small.

4. Submit a fresh sample. Do not send dead grass! If the sample must wait, store it in a cooler or refrigerator.

5. Package samples with different problems separately.

6. Include a written description of the problem and as much background about the site as possible. We need to know what kind of grass, location of the turf (greens, tees, athletic field, etc). A description of the symptoms and how they began, weather and soil conditions, and pesticide and fertiliz-

er applications are very important for us to know because they often provide clues to the problem.

The laboratory is also a site of research and development for new molecular techniques which will provide rapid, accurate diagnosis of pathogens that are currently very difficult to detect. Dr. Doug Maxwell is heading up this laboratory activity. Primary diagnosticians in the TDDL are myself (Dr. Julie Meyer, Extension Pathologist), Steve Millett, research associate in Plant Pathology and Turfgrass Science, and Mary Francis Heimann, O.S.F., Outreach Specialist.

The Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Laboratory is one of several diagnostic services at the University of Wisconsin available to the turf manager. These include:

- Insect Identification (Phil Pelletteri 262-6510)
- Weed Identification (Frank Rossi 262-1624)
- Soil Analysis (Soil and Plant Analysis Lab 262-4364)
- Soil Structure and Fertility Inquiries (Wayne Kussow 263-3631)

Turf samples can be mailed or taken to:

The Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Laboratory

285 Russell Labs  
Department of Plant Pathology  
1630 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706-1598  
Tel: (608) 262-1410  
FAX: (608) 263-2626

Email (internet): TDDL@plant-path.wisc.edu

Short term parking is available on Linden Drive across and down from the Russell Labs building, or behind the building off of Observatory Drive.

I hope you will take advantage of this service over the summer if you are ever in doubt about the health of your turf. We all wish you a good growing season! •

# WTA President's Message

*By Wayne Horman*

I never know if it's the calendar that determines that spring has arrived, or the large number of lawn care advertisements that fill the newspapers. This time of year, one only has to open a Sunday newspaper and see page after page of "do-it yourself" or professional lawn care advertisements to see how big the turfgrass industry has become in Wisconsin.

Along with the advertisements are the usual articles on how the turfgrass industry is hurting the environment. I still get upset by the slanted anti-pesticide spin the writers report. However I know that papers aren't sold and articles aren't read, on a lack of news. Telling the public that your lawn care company isn't going to hurt songbirds just isn't news. Dr. Frank Rossi did appear in a local newspaper article this past month on the benefits of lawn care. We could certainly use more of these positive articles.

Our industry is suffering another retirement. Dr. Chuck Koval, Professor of Entomology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has retired. Now the question is, "will he be replaced?" With all the budget cuts and hiring freezes that the university has, it appears doubtful for the near future. That is another battle we will have to fight.

This coming August, the WTA Summer Field Day will be bigger and better than ever! The research projects at the O. J. Noer Turfgrass Facility have been expanded and information provided will answer more of your needs. Mark your calendar for the 15th of August. I'll look forward to seeing you there. Enjoy your summer! •

---

## CIBA PROGRAM BENEFITS TURF RESEARCH

*By Wayne Horman*

Last summer Ciba Turf & Ornamentals offered a rebate program for golf course superintendents to participate in. This program gave the superintendents coupons for Ciba products they purchased. They could then cash in the coupons for certain prizes or give the coupons as a donation to turf research.

The Noer Turfgrass Facility and Wisconsin Turfgrass Association are very thankful they were thought of for many of those turf research donations. Nearly \$5000 was donated to Wisconsin turf research through the Ciba program. We would like to thank the superintendents listed below for participating in the program.

James Krutilla-Lake Windsor Golf Club  
Jeff Bottensek-Stevens Point Country Club  
Bruce Worzella-West Bend Country Club  
Michael Lee-Blackwolf Run Golf Course  
Scott Schaller-South Hills Golf & Country Club  
Tom Harrison-Maple Bluff Country Club  
James Gardner-Rochester Golf & Country Club  
David Beno-Bonnie Brook Golf Club  
Bob Erdahl-North Shore Country Club

Mark Kienert-Bulls Eye Country Club  
Jack Tripp-LaCrosse Country Club  
Patrick Norton-Nettle Creek Golf Course  
Kevin Clunis-Stillwater Country Club  
David Smith-Abbey Springs Golf Club  
Rod Johnson-Sheboygan Pine Hills CC  
Michael Berwick-Lawsonia Golf Course  
Monroe Miller-Blackhawk Country Club  
Tom Schwab-Monroe Country Club

Programs like this provide a great future for the turfgrass industry. Ciba is offering a similar program for 1995 as are some other manufacturers. Reinders/Daconil is another very generous program. I will let you know when I hear about other programs that provide for turf research in upcoming issues of the *Wisconsin Turfgrass News*. Once again, thanks to all of you that participate. •

## Calendar of Events

May 31	Super-Pro Golf Outing	University Ridge GC
June 19	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	Drugan's Castle Mound GC
June 20	Hanley's Annual Turf Field Day	Yahara Hills GC
July 10	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	Lake Wisconsin CC
Aug 7	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	CC of Wisconsin
Aug 8	WSPA Field Day	Long Sod Farm
Aug 9	WLF Garden Tour	Madison
Aug 10	WNA Field Day	UW ARS-West Madison
AUG 15	WTA SUMMER FIELD DAY	OJ NOER FACILITY
Sept 18	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	South Hills G&CC
Oct 2	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	Hawthorn Hills GC
Oct 7	WGCSA Dinner Dance	Chula Vista
Nov 8/9	Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium	Hyatt/Milwaukee
Dec 11/12	WGCSA/GCSAA Regional Seminar	Fond du Lac
Jan 9-11	WI Turfgrass and Greenspace Expo	Holiday Inn/Madison
Jan 22	WGCSA/GCSAA Technical Seminar	Fond du Lac
Feb 19-24	School of Turfgrass Management	UW Madison
March 4	WGCSA Spring Business/Education Meeting	Fond du Lac

*WTA Members – If you have an important date you'd like to share with other members call 608-845-6536 or Fax 608-845-8162 and let us include it in the next calendar*

### WISCONSIN TURFGRASS ASSN.

O.J. Noer Center  
3101 North County Trunk M  
Verona, WI 53593

First Class  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 2944  
Madison, WI