



WISCONSIN TURFGRASS NEWS

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FALL 1995

What A Difference a Day Makes

By Tom Schwab

Although the weather was brutal for most of August 1995, Mother Nature decided to let up for just one day. The day was for the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day. It was like the Biblical parting of the Red Sea, the way the humidity lifted for just 24 hours that August day. That short lived break in the weather along with anticipation of an important educational day had everyone in a good mood.

The day brought out record attendance. That attendance along with some special events were responsible for raising more than \$12,000 for turfgrass research in this state. For those reasons, the

Field Day had to be considered a success.

The Field Day was destined to be successful when retired professors Robert Newman, Gayle Worf, and Chuck Koval agreed to attend. We've seen Dr. Koval recently since he just retired, but the attendance of Drs. Newman and Worf was really a treat. They touched the lives of so many of us over the years and we really miss seeing them. Another extremely memorable event this year was to have the golf course superintendent of Butternut Hill Golf Course, John Osborn, sing the National Anthem at the opening session. He was accompanied by Noer Facility staff

member Kimberly Badtke on the keyboard. They both performed excellently and caught the hearts of the crowd.

The record attendance breaks down like this. There were 300 preregistered, 130 onsite registrations, 150 people working in exhibits, 50 guests and/or volunteer workers. The number of vendors had the greatest percentage of increase. There were 60 vendors this year compared to 45 at the 1994 Summer Field Day. The Noer Facility is soon going to be too small to hold Summer Field Day with this type of growth, (unless we acquire the new land

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The entrance to the 1995 WTA Summer Field Day.



John Osborn, accompanied by Kim Badtke, performed the national anthem.



Brian Swingle and Professor Chuck Koval (ret.)

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previously reported on in another issue). The vendors are such sincere supporters of the Noer Facility and your Wisconsin turfgrass industry that I hope you'll take note and support them with your business in return.

The Summer Field Day volunteer workers deserve a hardy thanks also. These volunteers organized vehicle parking, conducted pre- and onsite registration, compiled the tour booklet, stuffed envelopes, made signs, set up and cleaned up, ran the silent auction, and managed everything else to make the day run smoothly. They include the staff of Maple Bluff CC, Lake Wisconsin CC, North Shore CC, Noer Facility, and UW Departments of Horti-

culture and Plant Pathology, among others.

The silent auction raised substantial turf research dollars for the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association. WTA raised \$4,200 from the auction and had some fun doing it. Most of the auction items were donated by the trade show exhibitors. Be sure to show them your appreciation. There was also the putting contest on the management systems green that provided some fun and raised research dollars. Bob Erdahl from North Shore CC organized, ran and provided the prizes for the putting contest which raised another \$150 for turf research.

The real reason for Summer Field Day is always the research tour. This year the tour was split

into two groups to give more individual attention to attendees. One tour highlighted research related to golf turf. The other tour was for homelawn and landscape related turf studies. Both tours offered interesting talks on plant diseases, soils, entomology, and horticulture. This is where your research dollars are being used. The UW Turf Group professors and staff had an abundance of information to share. The crowds were not disappointed.

The entire Field Day was a success. Meaningful information was shared on equipment, supplies and research studies. Just the idea of getting together with peers to share summer stories makes the trip to Verona worthwhile. It turned out to be a wonderful day that made a difference.



Dr. Frank Rossi and his "red shirt" crew who kept Field Day running smoothly.



The silent auction raised substantial money again this year.



Charlie Shaw sought some good advice from Dr. Gayle Worf, UW-Madison professor emeritus. Lots of others did the same.



A captive audience on the research plots.



Dr. Doug Maxwell, Dr. Gayle Worf, and TDDL director Steve Millett.

President's Message

By Wayne Horman

As I sit down to write this message today, the wind has shifted from the south to the northwest. Within a few minutes, the gusty winds blew the humidity from our state. Maybe, just maybe, our hot, humid summer nights have ended.

Summers are what most people love about Wisconsin. Yes, the fall and spring are very nice also, but they only last 2 or 3 weeks. The winters...well, what nice things can you say about a season of the year that is best known for a time to hibernate? We usually have our share of hot weather, but this year it has been much worse.

The meteorologists say we

have set all kinds of records. We have had more than 27 days over 90 degrees. How many days did the humidity level reach over 70%? I don't know if they have ever needed to keep track of that before! Maybe this recent weather shift is only temporary, and we will have a few more weeks of summer to survive through. I do know that this has been a very difficult summer for those who maintain turfgrass.

Earlier this summer, the WTA board approved money to be used by Dr. Doug Maxwell (Plant Pathology) for additional work on studying various Brown Patches. After this season, this work is

now more important than ever. Hopefully, all WTA members feel the same way.

So instead of asking you for more money, I want to thank you for your support of the WTA. Please continue to attend Field Day, which was a big success this year, and don't forget to attend the Winter Conference in January. Your continued support of these important activities not only benefits funding additional research, but provides the turfgrass industry with valuable technical information.

Finally, a big thank you from the WTA Board to all those involved with planning and organizing of Field Day. Special thanks to the Professors, Tom Schwab and his staff at the Noer Facility. It wouldn't have been possible without you.

MOCAP Registration Ends

By Dr. Chuck Koval

Rhone-Poulenc Ag Company has informed the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that it is voluntarily canceling the existing uses of ethoprop (MOCAP) on turfgrasses effective July 18, 1995. The reason for cancellation is listed as the cost of re-registration. Existing stocks of the canceled products containing ethoprop as the active ingredient may be distributed, sold and used until such stocks are depleted.

While not one of the major products used for turf insect control in Wisconsin, it was an excellent tool in many difficult situations. Ethoprop is very active against a broad spectrum of soil inhabiting insects and nematodes. Its rapid action minimized insect damage without the necessity of repeat insecticide applications which can be more hazardous to beneficial species in the turf

complex. Thus, the available turf insect control products has continued to diminish faster than suitable replacements can be found.

Rhone-Poulenc will consider maintaining the domestic uses on turf grasses of ethoprop if another party is willing to develop the data required for registration. At this moment, that possibility seems unlikely.

Although the EPA has stated that all existing product uses can continue until supplies are depleted, it is not wise to carry-over any product for some future emergency. Plan to use existing supplies as part of your 1996 insect management strategies. In the past, the EPA has canceled all existing uses after a reasonable period of time has elapsed leaving the individuals with unused product to dispose of which can be difficult and costly.

Mark Your
Calendar!

**WISCONSIN
TURFGRASS
- and -
GREENSPACE
EXPO**

JANUARY 9, 10 & 11, 1996

**HOLIDAY INN -
MIDDLETON**

*The Wisconsin
Turfgrass News*

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Turfgrass Establishment: The First Step to Low Input Turf Management Program

By Dr. Frank S. Rossi
UW-Madison, Department of Horticulture

As we finish the "Dog Days of Summer", we begin to reflect on the ups and downs of the growing season. Anticipating the fall and it's cooler temperatures, we often wonder how to solve chronic problems in a turf sward, mindful of the heightened sensitivity of the public regarding turf care.

Typically, problem areas can be traced back to improper establishment practices including poor site preparation and grass selection. If you are considering establishing a new area or renovation of an existing area, there are a few simple steps to follow. Remember, care and attention at establishment pays off over time and is the first step to a low input turfgrass management program.

Seed or Sod?

Our first decision for new site establishment or for total renovation is the choice between seeding or sodding. This is an easy equation if economics is the determining factor due to the relatively high cost of sodding. One must remember however, that monies spent on proper establishment "up-front" will be saved in the long term by a high quality turf.

As with all decisions in life, one must weigh the pro's and con's of the options. Sod offers instant gratification for a price, while seeding will require time including more patience and care to reach the level of quality of sod. The primary advantage of sodding is the flexibility—you can lay sod anytime of year that it is available and providing irrigation can be supplied.

It just so happens I am preparing this article as we begin to enter the optimum time for establishing from seed. The cooler late summer and early fall temperatures provide an optimum growing environment for the cool season grasses. This time of year is more favorable for establishing grass from seed primarily because of the reduced competition from weeds as is associated with spring seedings.

Establishment Principles

If establishment is to be successful, whether it is from seed or sod, two basic principles are involved: grass selection, and site preparation. Timing is also a major consideration.

Proper grass selection

Sodding. This is a decision where your options are limited when choosing to sod. Not all grasses are available as sod, although often times sod is made up of blends of several improved varieties of species such as bluegrass to provide improved disease resistance. Additionally, a few growers may offer sod adapted to shady or utility areas. However, these grasses may not be the preferred species for all sites. If your sod requirements are unique, ask your grower about adapted sod. If you have a very sandy soil at your site, avoid using sod grown on finer textured media which will limit water movement into the sand and result in poor drainage. Finally, avoid sod that is contaminated with certain grassy weeds such as creeping bentgrass (if you are not on a golf course) and annual bluegrass.

Seeding.

Kentucky bluegrass is a high maintenance and high quality turf
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Thank you 1995 Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day Exhibitors for helping make this year's event a success.

AgrEvo USA	HSK & Assoc	Pro Greens of
American Sod	J W Turf	Midwest
Badger Plastics	Johnson & Assoc	Pro Lawn Inc
& Supply	KEI	ProGreen Plus
Bayer Corp/Miles	Kellogg Inc	Pug Inc
Cannon Turf Supply	Kohler Company	Reinders Irrigation
Cenex Land-O-Lakes	Knox Fertilizer	Reinders Turf
Central WI	Lebanon Chem	Rohm & Haas
Evergreens	Lesco	Scotts Co
Chipco	McFarlane	Spring Valley
Ciba Turf &	Mechanical Soil	Teal Inc
Ornamentals	Tech	Temporary Rain
Conserv F\S	Medalist America	Terra International
Contree Sales	Melcher Equipment	Tillmann Wholesale
Didion Inc	MidAmerco Inc	Tiziani Golf Car
E-Z-Go Textron	Milorganite	Turf Supply Co
Finn Corp	Milw. Ford Tractor	Tyler Ent
Greensmix	Olds Seed Co	Uniroyal Chemical
Growmark Inc	Par Aide Products	Vigoro
Hanley Co	Pendelton Turf	WDATCP
Hanson & Assoc	Supply	Wisconsin Turf
Horst Dist	Precision Laboratories	

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species and has an excellent ability to fill in bare areas via underground stems (rhizomes). Many improved varieties are available and differ in disease resistance, color, and shade tolerance. Most varieties require 7 to 10 days to germinate and up to 3 to 4 weeks for full establishment. However, certain varieties claim to reduce establishment times. A bluegrass blend for a lawn should include at least 3 varieties.

Perennial ryegrass is also a high quality high maintenance turf that is receiving more attention as a lawn grass. This increased attention is a result of the availability to fine textured, darker green, and insect and disease resistant varieties.

Typically used in mixtures with bluegrasses, the ryegrasses germinate in 3 to 4 days and provide quick cover. Because of this competitiveness in the seedling stage, ryegrasses should not be included in mixtures with bluegrasses at more than 15% by weight.

The ryegrasses have been criticized for poor "mowability", which results in "white-tagging" when a blade is torn.

Finally, certain varieties have what is called an endophyte (which is a fungus that grows in the grass sheath) which imparts resistance to surface feeding insects such as sod webworms and cinch bugs. Also, perennial ryegrass may suffer severe winter kill.

Tall fescue is considered a middle maintenance grass because it tolerates dry, infertile conditions, but it has a high leaf extension rate which creates an increased mowing requirement. Many of the improved "turf-type" varieties are fine-textured and will provide an attractive sward. However, it is recommended that it be seeded in a monostand or, if in a mixture with bluegrass, the tall fescue must be at least 80% of the mixture by weight. As with ryegrass, tall rescue has questionable winter hardiness.

The fine fescues are available as creeping red, chewings, and hard. These grasses are true low maintenance species, requiring

less inputs of fertilizer, water and pesticides. They are less aggressive than blue or ryegrasses; however they are more well adapted to shady, dry, infertile sites. While the fine fescues are criticized for having disease problems, often times these problems are made worse by improper management such as overwatering and too much fertilizer. They perform well in coastal climates where extreme heat is moderated and good air circulation is present. Some varieties are endophyte enhanced for insect resistance.

Low Input Highlights.

Remember with sodding pay close attention to the growing media at your site and what the sod is grown in; poor drainage creates an ideal environment for diseases as well as compaction problems. Avoid weed contaminated sod to minimize herbicide applications. Time seeding in the fall to give grasses a competitive edge over weeds, reducing reliance on herbicides. Select disease and insect resistant species and utilize several varieties in blends to reduce fungicide and insecticide use.

Site Preparation and Seedling Care

1. Evaluate your site through soil sampling if a new area or, management history if renovating an old area. Either way, understand your solid nutritional and structural characters before establishing turf. If renovating an area, apply non-selective herbicides for perennial weed control.
2. Grade surface and smooth new area. If extensive grading is needed, remove topsoil, stockpile, and grade subsoil as close to surface grade as possible. Replace topsoil so that it is of uniform thickness.
3. For a new area, incorporate starter fertilizer and any pH modifying materials, as required by soil test.
4. Finish final grading and roll with lightweight roller to reveal any uneven spots, and then lightly scratch the surface and smooth spots.

5. At seeding and 2 to 4 weeks following seeding apply soluble N source up to 1.5 lb/1000 ft².

6a. If you are sodding, moisten soil, lay sod with ends staggered, and lightly roll to ensure contact with soil.

6b. If you are seeding, broadcast or drop spread seed at appropriate rate, lightly rake in, and lightly roll on dry soil to ensure good soil and seed contact. This is often a neglected part of the process.

6c. If you are renovating an area, consider slit seeding or core cultivating followed by broadcasting and incorporating seed into cores. The key is to have good seed: soil contact. This is where excessive thatch will cause failure due to the poor water holding capacity of the thatch.

7. Mulching a new seeding can be helpful to prevent erosion and hasten establishment. Use only weed-free straw or marsh hay; avoid pasture grass hay that will contain timothy, or other weedy grasses.

8. Supply irrigation to keep soil moist in a new seeding until well established, after which irrigate once or twice a week. If sodding, avoid over-irrigating which will limit rooting and cause rutting from traffic.

9. Mow new seedlings when they are at the height than the intended for the area. Mowing encourages tillering and many broadleaf weeds will mow out.

Low Input Establishment Hints. Avoid excessive traffic on newly seeded or sodded areas to allow grass plants to root into soil. A sharp mower blade is vital to prevent seedlings from being pulled from the soil. Once again, attention to details such as timing of establishment, grass selection, site preparation, and seedling care will reduce those chronic problems you reflect on every year.

Take the first step to an IPM program today – do it right! For further information regarding grass selection, sodding a lawn, and lawn renovation, contact your cooperation extension agent.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sept 18	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	South Hills G&CC
Sept 25	WTA Fundraising Golf Tournament	University Ridge GC
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
Jan 30,31	WNA Winter Workshop	Oshkosh
Feb 5-11	GCSAA Golf Course Conference & Show	Orlando, FL
Feb 19-24	School of Turfgrass Management	UW Madison
Feb 25-27	WLF Winter Convention	Kohler
March 4	WGCSA Spring Business/Education Meeting	Fond du Lac
March 11-15	UWEX Regional Turf School	

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 you in the next calendar

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