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VOLUME SEVEN, NUMBER ELEVEN

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1991

MAIN EVENTS

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The need for water saving grasses has intensified during the last decade. Before selecting one, superintendents and sports turf managers must determine how the grass will be used, density requirements, irrigation needs, appearance, and environmental demands.

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Our annual guide to the finest products, services, and manufacturers. Use this directory for your year-round buying needs.

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A full-color look at some of the hottest products for the golf and sports turf market.

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COVER: Prairie buffalograss at Barton Creek Conference, Resort & Country Club, Austin, TX. Photo courtesy Crenshaw & Doquet Turfgrass.

JACKLINS ACQUIRE MEDALIST

Don, Doyle, and Duanne Jacklin of Jacklin Seed in Post Falls, ID have agreed to acquire the Medalist Turf Seed Division of NK Lawn and Garden Company. The division will be renamed Medalist America and will operate as an independent entity supplying grass seed to its existing professional and dealer network.

MOBAY CHANGES NAME

Following reorganization and renaming of its parent company, Mobay Specialty Products has changed its name to Miles, Inc.

Effective January 1, 1992, Bayer USA of Pittsburgh, the U.S. holding company of Bayer AG, Leverkusen, Germany, will become an operating company. At that time, the company will change its name to Miles, Inc., which is currently the name of its largest subsidiary. The major U.S. subsidiaries, which include Mobay Corporation and Agfa Corporation, will be merged into divisions of the new Miles. Mobay Specialty Products

is currently a part of Mobay Agricultural Chemicals Division.

HOK DESIGNS HONG KONG STADIUM

In the valley of a tropical forest in Hong Kong, a 40,000-seat stadium is being designed by HOK Sports Facilities Group. The architectural firm has been commissioned by the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club to design the \$113 million venue.

The new complex will replace the existing 28,000-seat government facility constructed in 1953. It will attract teams from 24 countries when it hosts the "Invitation Sevens" Rugby Tournament, and international sports event hosted by Hong Kong for 17 years. It will be held in the new stadium in 1997.

Spectator amenities will include a 300-seat cafe/restaurant, novelty vending stands, large screen video, sound, and public announcement systems, and full media facilities. It will also include 50 private boxes, a lecture theater, team facilities, and 55,000 square feet of office space.

GCSAA PIONEER PASSES AWAY

Chester Mendenhall, a past president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and its last surviving founding father, died recently. He was 96.

Eighteen days before his death, Mendenhall helped dedicate the organization's new headquarters in Lawrence, KS. During the ceremony, he delighted attendees with recollections from GSCAA's past.

From 1940 to 1946, Mendenhall was GCSAA director. He served as its president in 1948. An enthusiastic advocate of the association and the profession, Mendenhall helped the organization increase its national scope by moving its annual conference and trade show to the West Coast in 1949. The event had previously been held only in the Midwest and East.

Mendenhall received the organization's Distinguished Service Award in 1986 and the United States Golf Association's Green Section Award in 1990.

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THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

STMA IS BACK ON TRACK



Having invested more than half of my journalism career in the sports turf industry, I can now say with reasonable assurance that the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is back on track. It is finally making headway toward serving those with the greatest need: the groundskeepers at high schools, parks, and universities.

While the recent STMA annual conference in San Diego was disappointing in certain respects, it cleared up most questions about the direction and future of the association. Chapter involvement is revitalizing STMA, making it more responsive to members' needs. The energy level and dedication of chapter representatives at the show were inspiring. The spirit of the founding members is back. New blood is pumping through the association's veins.

The conference also got the ball rolling on critical issues confronting the industry, such as the need for standards, cooperation between providers of natural *and* synthetic turf, collection of industry statistics, and the undisputable link between sports injuries and the professionalism of sports turf managers, architects, and contractors. While the national focuses on these issues, the chapters can provide the "hands-on" technical information integral for day-to-day operations through institutes and seminars. The combination is on target!

It's clear that few groundskeepers have the time or money to travel to a national conference. That doesn't mean that they can't share in advances in sports turf management. The feedback of those attending regional institutes is totally positive toward the value of these programs. Local distributors have been very supportive of such events. Extension service and university specialists are anxious to get involved, as are a number of national experts. Those who have presented successful programs in their region are willing to share their experiences.

If STMA puts together an effective and responsive staff, its future is bright.

Bruce F. Shank

EVENTS

CALENDAR

JANUARY, 1992

8-10 North Carolina Turfgrass Conference And Trade Show, Turfgrass Council of North Carolina, Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, NC. Contact: Gene Maples, Turfgrass Council of North Carolina, P.O. Box 289, Southern Pines, NC 28388, (919) 695-1333.

13-16 Virginia Turf and Landscape Conference, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Richmond Centre and Marriott, Richmond, VA. Contact: Randeon Tharp, (804) 340-3473.

29-30 Turf And Landscape Exposition, Northern California Turfgrass Council, Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, CA. Contact: NCTC, 425 Oak St., Brentwood, CA 94513, (510) 516-0146.

FEBRUARY

5-7 Mid-Winter Conference and Exposition, American Sod Producers Association, Bally's Casino & Resort, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: ASPA, 1855 Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008, (708) 705-9898.

10-17 63rd GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show, New Orleans, LA. Contact: GCSAA, 1421 Research Park Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049, (913) 841-2240.

Send announcements on your events two months in advance to editor, Golf & SportsTURF, P.O. Box 8420, Van Nuys, CA 91409. Fax: (818) 781-8517.

In the past decade, the need for learning about water saving grasses has not changed, only intensified. The circumstances that have generated a growing interest in turfgrass water use include: droughts in many areas, increasing demands on a limited available supply, the increasing cost of available water, and a desire for lower maintenance ground covers.

In the past few months I have seen the following water-related news in turf industry publications:

1) A map of the U.S.A. showing areas of moderate to severe droughts covering much of the United States.

2) An article on Las Vegas showing a tripling of population with the same water rights on the Colorado River.

3) A discussion of the cost of utilizing storm run off or effluent on golf courses in California.

4) Numerous articles on buffalograss, zoysia, wildflowers and other species with lower maintenance demands.

The most important development in recent research is that turf water use can be reduced not only by changing the species of grass planted, but by changing the management and the perception of how the turf should look. Much of the water usage of grass is not due to the needs of the grass but due to people.

Superintendents and sports turf managers need to analyze each turfgrass situation to determine how the grass will be used, time of year it will be utilized, turf density necessary, irrigation to be practiced, necessary appearance and environmental conditions before selecting a species and variety of grass to be planted. Many species that have reduced water requirements and/or drought avoidance have winter or summer dormancy periods which may make them unacceptable for some uses. Others may not form the density of turf necessary for heavy use areas but be very

acceptable for roughs or other low use sites.

In order for any grass to save water turf managers must modify their irrigation practices and water to the needs of the grass and not by the clock.

Warm-season grasses typically have lower water needs than other species. Although use of many of these species is limited to the extreme southern United States, certain varieties of buffalograss, zoysiagrass and bermudagrass have better cold tolerance and can be used in many other areas of the United States.



Eight-year-old plots in Beltsville, MD, show difference between straight zoysia (R) and a mixture of zoysia and tall fescue (L).

Search Intensifies For Water Saving Grasses

By Leah A. Brilman, Ph.D.

These grasses will go dormant during the winter and have to be overseeded, or established with a companion cool-season grass, if year-long green is necessary or desired.

New, vegetatively propagated varieties of buffalograsses and zoysias have

improved quality, establishment and/or reduced maintenance when compared to older material. In addition, improved seeded varieties of all three species are currently being developed or marketed. These will increase the options available for people wanting to use these species.

The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program has just initiated tests of these species to determine the best growing area for each species and variety as well as their maintenance demands. Other species of warm-season grasses are currently under evaluation as potential

turfgrasses with reduced water requirements. Many of these are species native to arid or semi-arid areas of the United States.

The USGA/GCSAA Turfgrass Research Program is supporting much of this research with the aim of reducing water use and maintenance costs at golf courses. Dr. Charles Mancino and Andrew Ralowicz are evaluating the potential of curly mesquitegrass (*Hilaria belangeri*) as a desert turfgrass. Drs. Robin L. Cuany and Anthony Koski are developing material of three western adapted species, one of which is a warm season grass, blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*). The other two species are native, cool-season grasses, alkaligrass (*Puccinellia* spp.) and fairway crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). The primary research areas on these species, before they can be used as low maintenance turf at many sites, is improvement of seed production, density, color and, in some

cases, leaf texture.

Alkaligrass is not very drought resistant and is dormant during hot weather. However, it is salt-tolerant, which may be very important as turf managers use poorer quality water.

continued on page 8

Water Saving Grasses

continued from page 7

In evaluating cool-season grasses for reduced water use, the climate of the region and pattern of water demand must be considered.

In certain areas of the country, water is also used to cool these grasses during summer, so it is not just the water use rate that must be considered.

Tall fescues are known as drought resistant turfgrasses but actually utilize more water (have a higher evapotranspiration or ET rate) than many other cool-season grasses. Their major advantage is their deep root system that allows them to extract water from a

much larger soil profile and thus avoid drought. Eventually that soil profile

has to be refilled by water through rainfall or irrigation or the plants will go dormant.

In the Pacific Northwest and other areas with only short periods without rain-



Sweet vernalgrass next to perennial ryegrass (foreground) at the University of Rhode Island.

fall and extensive rainfall during other times, tall fescue will stay green all

year with no irrigation. Many of the dwarfier types of tall fescue have roots as deep as standard types with reduced rates of top growth and lower clipping yields. Some have shallower roots. These

types may be useful in reducing maintenance at some sites and areas of the country.

Dr. Robert Carrow of the University of Georgia recently noted that in warm humid regions, ET rates are often not the primary determinant of drought tolerance, since most species show low ET rates in these areas.

The key determinant of drought tolerance is actually acid soil tolerance since many of these areas have a very acid subsoil. This subsoil prevents deep root penetration of grass varieties and species without acid tolerance and thus limits their water supply.

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