

TURFGRASS RESEARCH

A PUBLICATION OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

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Turfgrass research is expensive. Consider the labor, equipment and facilities required to perform legitimate and meaningful field research with turfgrasses. Maintaining and evaluating turfgrass research plots is a continuous process, usually requiring several years to obtain useful results with any single project. Because of the expense the number of turfgrass research locations has been very limited. Even today with major public interest in turf there are a limited number of sizable turfgrass research programs nationally. Despite this fact there are probably no regions within the country without access to research findings applicable to the climate, soils and use needs of the region.

Unfortunately, much of the research information derived at any given location may not be well disseminated to the potential interested audience. Using the research program at the University of Rhode Island as an example, I will try to explain this last statement.

Turfgrass research was initiated at the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station in 1890. It has been continuous since that time. The program has grown from the part-time effort of one re-

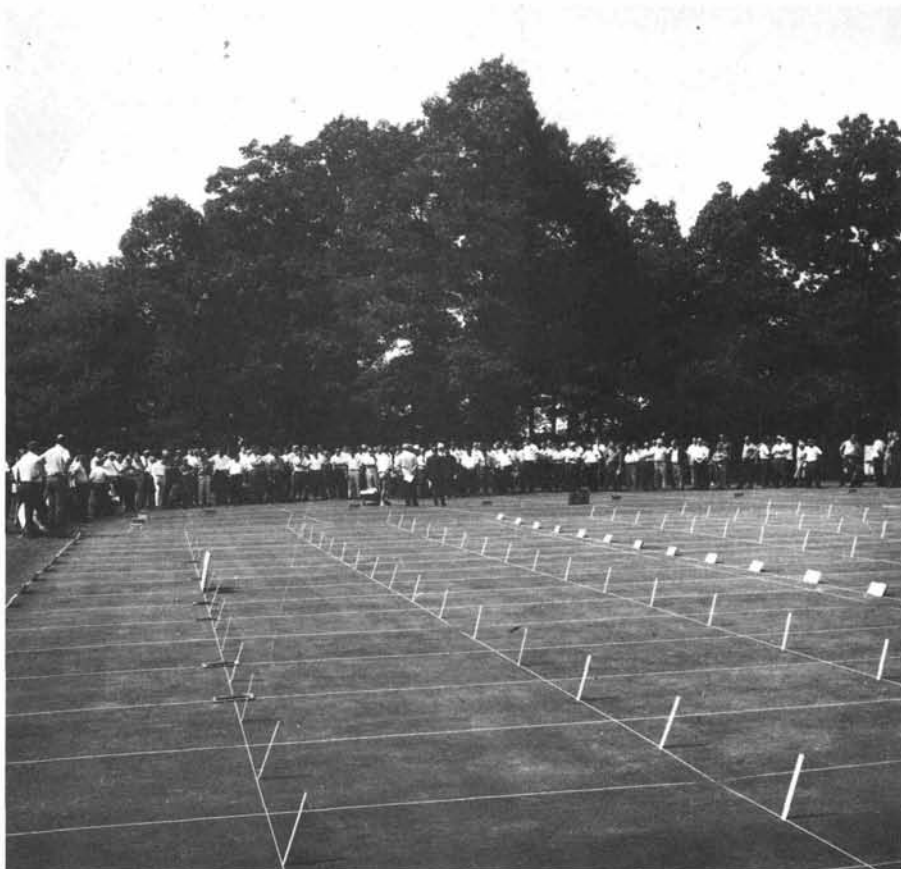
searcher to involve full or part-time efforts of almost a dozen researchers, teachers and extension specialists.

Throughout the years many research and extension publications have been released from our Station to report research results or to provide recommendations for turfgrass management. It has been unfortunate, however, that much accomplished research has never been published and much of that which has been released is in the form of papers published only in science journals. These papers are read primarily by other researchers and are usually in a form not terribly useful to the professional turfgrass manager.

This situation is not unique to the Rhode Island Station. The situation occurs for a number of reasons. First, a university researcher must publish if he is to be retained and promoted. However, it is primarily the papers published in the professional science journals that are judged "proper" publications for university researchers. Trade journal articles, those that in fact reach the real user, get little weight in annual evaluation. It is very easy to see why a researcher spends what time he has available on scientific papers rather than on other forms of more useful writing.

Secondly, many university turfgrass researchers are also involved in teaching and Cooperative

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Extension activities. The subject of turfgrass management is invariably of interest to a large segment of the population at any location. This holds for the amateur as well as the professional. The number of letters, office visits and phone calls requesting advice may be considerable during many months of the year. Time spent in this manner cannot be spent writing.

A third reason for unpublished data relates to the manner in which much research is accomplished. At most major university turfgrass research locations, graduate assistants are retained to assist in the program. These graduate students greatly extend the amount of work that can be accomplished. Too often, however, these researchers complete a project, obtain their advanced degree and depart to make a living without personally publishing their work. In the meantime, new assistants are started and may require considerable attention from the research professor, thus again limiting writing time.

To turfgrass researchers, and perhaps to most

Agricultural Experiment Station workers, publishing research results is often one of the most difficult things to accomplish. Research is of little value unless the information attained is presented to those who might benefit from the results. For this reason the turf group at the University of Rhode Island have initiated a publication entitled "U.R.I. Turfgrass Research Review." It will be a quarterly publication sponsored by Cooperative Extension and intended primarily for professional turfgrass managers throughout the New England region.

The publication will contain reviews of Station research performed through the years that still have practical value. Much can often be gained from history. The publication will also contain findings from current research projects. Hopefully, the information will be presented in language that the reader can readily understand. We hope that we can make our research efforts of much greater value to the turfgrass industry through the publication of, "U.R.I. Turfgrass Research Review."