

TURF TWISTERS

THE VELVET TOUCH

Question: I have been told that I have velvetgrass in rough areas on my golf course. It grows in clumps and has thick blades. I'm sure it isn't related to velvet bentgrasses, or is it? (Pennsylvania)

Answer: No, velvetgrass and velvet bentgrass are two separate and unrelated species. The scientific name for the former is *Holcus lanatus* L., the latter is *Agrostis canina* L.

The former is a broadleaf, bunch-type grass, the latter is a fine leaf creeping-type grass. Velvetgrass perhaps got its name from the velvet soft texture of the plant. Though it feels smooth as velvet, it is a weed. It is difficult to control. Normally, control involves use of non-selective herbicides. It is not a very troublesome weed in the Northeast, it isn't aggressive, it is propagated from seed.

IS IMPORTANT

Question: Why is magnesium important to plant growth and development? (Indiana)

Answer: Magnesium is used in several important physiological functions within the plant. Some of these functions include the translocation of phosphorus, a co-factor of many of the plant's enzyme systems. It is also the central atom in the chlorophyll molecule.

FOR TREE WOUNDS

Question: I've recently heard some pros and cons on the value of tree paint. What's your opinion? (Massachusetts)

Answer: Recent information seems to indicate that tree paints are more cosmetic than anything in the prevention of decay or insect attack. However, new wound treatments are now being studied that look promising.