Horticulture Tips
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Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

Grape and Pecan Courses Available for 2003
Dean McCraw

The Oklahoma Grape Management Course for 2003 will begin February 20, 2003. The Oklahoma Pecan Management Course will begin February 18, 2003. Both courses will meet from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Oklahoma Fruit and Pecan Research Station, Perkins, OK. Preregistration is required.

A copy of the schedule with registration information and meeting dates for each course is attached. The schedules and registration information can also be found by following pecan or grape links at the following: www.okstate.edu/OSU_Ag/asnr/hortla/ftpcns/homepage.htm.

Tall Fescue/Bluegrass/Ryegrass Mixtures: A Good Option for Lightly Shaded Lawns
Dennis Martin

Homeowners and professional turf managers can expect to see more mixtures of cool-season grass seed becoming available in Oklahoma in the future. Based on recent interactions with some seed vendors, they will be expanding their cool-season grass seed offerings from strictly blends of turf-type tall fescues to mixtures of turf-type tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass.

Traditionally, turf-type tall fescues were given "center stage" when it came to turfgrass suitable for use in light to moderately shaded areas in the upper 2/3rds of Oklahoma. While perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass were not recommended for use alone in 100% stands, they were occasionally suggested for use in mixtures with tall fescue to soften the overall texture of the turfgrass stand and to broaden adaptation through improved genetic diversity in the mix.

My own personal scouting efforts conducted over the last decade on many successful cool-season turf areas has revealed that a large number of these stands are comprised of mixtures of tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. Mixed cool-season stands have performed well in areas such as Enid, Tulsa, Broken Arrow, Edmond, Norman, Oklahoma City, Stillwater and Ponca City. Many of these mixed grass areas were established unknowingly or unintentionally by the homeowner or professional turf manager. In some cases, the Kentucky bluegrass may have been an unintentional contaminant in the tall fescue seed. In other cases, the

grass seed was selected with tall fescue being the principal component in mind, even though the bag was clearly labeled as also containing Kentucky bluegrass and/or perennial ryegrass. Still in other cases, tall fescue sod was purchased by the installer, but the sod was actually established at the farm using a mixture of tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. Tall fescue alone will not produce a sod with suitable strength for rolling and shipping, so sod producers must use either nylon netting to hold fescue sod together or Kentucky bluegrass is added at the time of seeding the sod field and the underground runners of the bluegrass (called rhizomes) provide sod tensile strength to the product. Regardless of how the other components got there, mixtures of cool-season grasses are working well in real world applications of light shade in Oklahoma.

Each component of a cool-season grass mix brings strengths and weaknesses to the mixture. Tall fescue has better shade tolerance and better resistance to summer patch and dollar spot diseases than Kentucky bluegrass. However, tall fescue is a relatively coarse textured bunch-type grass that is more susceptible to brown patch disease and Rhizoctonia blight. Kentucky bluegrass is finer textured than tall fescue, better able to spread and fill in gaps in the turfgrass stand using its underground spreading stems called rhizomes. Rhizomes are a feature that Kentucky bluegrass shares with bermudagrass and zoysiagrass. Perennial ryegrass has perhaps fewer benefits to bring to the cool-season grass mixture than Kentucky bluegrass, but one can still make a case for its use in the mix. Perennial ryegrass is finer textured than tall fescue, but it is still a bunch-type grass. The disease spectrum of perennial ryegrass is about the same as that of tall fescue. However, perennial ryegrass is not troubled by summer patch or necrotic ringspot as is Kentucky bluegrass. Perennial ryegrass is often more troubled with Pythium blight disease than is tall fescue or Kentucky bluegrass. Usually, diseases and other performance problems are not as severe on mixes of cool season grasses as they are on 100% stands of a single species of cool-season grass. This is believed to be due to the fact that the mixture is more genetic diversity. Not every plant in the population is equally susceptible to a given disease and there is often at least one species that is tolerant to the unique environmental stress present at a given site.

During the last decade, we have tested hundreds of tall fescues, perennial ryegrasses and Kentucky bluegrasses for performance at Stillwater, OK as an official cooperator test site for the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP). Many cultivars in these three species hold a great deal of promise for use in cool-season grass mixes. Seed vendors as well as any consumers or turf management professionals that are developing their own mixtures should definitely access NTEP performance data to pick the best performing and most disease resistant cultivars within each turfgrass species being used in the mix. Also, it is helpful to pick varieties that have similar color and growth rate so as not to develop a mixture that has contrasting components that may lead to a nonuniform appearance. Turfgrass performance data is available at www.ntep.org. OSU and NTEP does not test mixes or blends of components due to the astronomical number of combinations possible as well as due to the fact that seed vendors often change components of mixes and blends very frequently due to cultivar availability and pricing issues.

Mixing is not and will never be a "cure-all" for the wide variety of problems created by using cool-season grasses in Oklahoma. Also, mixing will not over come the problems on cool-season lawns created by mismanagement of turfgrass areas. There will likely never be the "perfect" turfgrass. However, cool-season grass mixes definitely should receive "center stage" for use in

lightly shaded turfgrass areas in Oklahoma. Mixes have already proven themselves in "real world " applications of light shade across Oklahoma.

Late Summer – A Good Time to Assess Lawn Weed Control Needs

Jim Shrefler

Compared to recent past summers, the milder temperatures and more timely rainfall experienced in much of Oklahoma has been a welcome change for those interested in maintaining an attractive lawn. It may have meant more mowing but it surely resulted in a decreased need to water.

You may have felt that lawn weeds were less of a problem this year. The more luxurious grass growth may have helped the grass to be more competitive with weeds. This would be especially so if you applied fertilizers in a timely fashion during the spring and summer. It may also be that weeds that were present during drier years were still there but were just not as obvious due to the more abundant grass.

Whether you are an experienced lawn aficionado or have just recently taken greater interest in improving your lawn, something you are probably concerned about is weed control. In either case, now is an idea time to get a better understanding of your specific weed problems and to make an assessment of future weed control needs.

There may not be a great need to control existing weeds at the present time. Warm season weeds such as crabgrass will be killed when cold weather arrives. However, if you have some problem areas it may still be worthwhile using postemergence (applied after weed seeds have germinated and plant is growing) herbicides. Your County Extension Office can provide suggestions on postemergence herbicides that may be used and when to apply them.

There are other things that may be done this time of year that are maybe more important to successful weed management for the future. In large part, these are easy and inexpensive measures you can take. The benefits are that these steps will help you better understand your lawn and maybe reduce the effort that will be needed in the future to keep you lawn attractive.

The first question to ask is: Are you sure what kind of turfgrass, or grasses, you have in your lawn? The selection of weed control measures can depend on knowledge of what the desired species of grass are in the lawn. Some of the common grasses found in southern Oklahoma lawns include Bermudagrass, St. Augustine, fescues, bahiagrass, and centipede. In northern and central areas of the state, bermudagrass, buffalograss, zoysiagrass and tall fescue as well as tall fescue/bluegrass mixtures are common. In many cases, a mixture of several species is found. This is desirable to some. For example, a mixture of St. Augustine and Bermudagrass is useful for lawns in southeastern Oklahoma that include sunny and shady areas. If you are not sure exactly what grass or grasses you have, look your lawn over carefully for variation in appearance of grass leaves (width and texture), growth habit (clumped or spreading). Collect a sample of each specific type of grass you find. Seek a knowledgeable source to help you identify the

different grasses that you collect. Some sources would be a reputable garden center or your County Extension Office.

Another question to ask this time of year is what are the weed species that cause you the most problems in your lawn during the summer? Again, the selection of the best weed control measures may depend on knowing what weeds need to be controlled. As in the case of determining which grasses are in your lawn, now is the time to collect samples of weeds for identification. For identification purposes, it often helps to have samples that are "flowering". Flowers on weeds are often inconspicuous so look carefully for the presence of small flowers, seedpods or other structures that are different than the leaves. Check to see if the plant has runners and if these have roots along their length. Include all of these characteristic parts in your sample. To keep samples in useful condition, they may be planted or bagged and kept cool. To get a planted sample, dig the weed up with roots and soil and place it in a container that has drainage. To bag, place the sample in a plastic bag with a lightly moistened paper towel and store in a cool place. Regardless of how you prepare the sample, do not allow the plant to dry up. Again, your County Extension Office or a reputable gardening expert may help with plant identification.

Have you done a soil test of your lawn recently? Soil can be tested to determine the acidity or soil reaction and test for the amounts of nutrients in the soil. This is important for weed control since improper soil conditions may favor growth of some weeds over that of the desired grass. If soil is too acid, and lime is to be added to increase the pH, a good time to do so is the fall or winter. Now is a good time to test soil to determine these needs so that lime application can be made in a timely manner. Your County Extension Office can provide information on proper procedures for collecting a soil sample and submitting it for analysis.

A final need to be assessed right now is that of control of cool season weeds. Some of our turf species will be dormant during winter. Control of cool season weeds may or may not be a concern to you. However, certain cool season species are undesirable in the springtime. A particular concern is Spurweed (also referred to as Lawn Burweed); a tiny plant found in many areas in Southern Oklahoma whose seed is born in a small bur that is very bothersome. This weed may be controlled with preemergence (applied before weed is visible) herbicides in the fall or postemergence herbicides applied in late winter. Selection of suitable control measures for this weed will depend on the grass species you have. Your County Extension Office is a good source of information on the control of and other cool season weed species.

GARDEN TIPS FOR SEPTEMBER!

David Hillock

Landscape

- Watch for fall specials at garden centers and nurseries since fall is a great time for planting many ornamentals.
- Choose spring flowering bulbs as soon as available.
- Plant cool season annuals like pansies, ornamental cabbage or kale, snapdragons and dusty miller when temperatures begin to cool.

- You have all of September to plant cool season vegetables like spinach, leaf lettuce, mustard and radishes, and until the middle of September to plant rutabagas, Swiss chard, garlic and turnips.
- Watch for and control any late infestations of tree webworms.
- Twig girdler insects should be controlled if large numbers of small branches of elms, pecans, or persimmons are uniformly girdled from the tree and fall to the ground.
- Begin to reduce the amount of light on outside tropical houseplants by placing them under shade trees before bringing them indoors for the winter.

Lawn

- Last nitrogen fertilizer application of the year on warm-season grasses should be applied no later than September 15. (F-6420)
- Winter broadleaf weeds like dandelion will begin to emerge in late September, which is also the best time to control them with a 2,4-D type herbicide.
- If pre-emergent control of winter-annual weeds (henbit, chickweed, annual bluegrass, etc.) is desired in lawns, the application should be completed by the 2nd week of September. (F-6421) *Note: Do not treat areas that will be seeded in the fall.*
- Continue bermudagrass spray program with glyphosate products for areas being converted over to tall fescue this fall. (F-6421)
- Plan to seed bluegrass, fescue, or ryegrass as needed in shady areas in mid- to late-September. Fall is the best time to establish cool-season lawns (F-6419).
- White grub damage can become visible this month. Apply appropriate soil insecticide if white grubs are a problem (F-7306). Water product into soil.

AAS Vegetable Award Winners

David Hillock

Each year All-America Selections (AAS) test gardens around the country test and then introduce significantly improved new flowers and vegetables grown from seed and bedding plants.

An AAS Award recognizes a flower or vegetable for significant achievements, proven to be superior to all others on the market.

You can visit one of the test gardens right here in Oklahoma. Oklahoma State University at Oklahoma City has one of the many gardens around the country that participate in the trials. If you wish to visit the gardens they are at 400 N. Portland, Oklahoma City, OK 73107.

Listed below are the AAS Vegetable winners for 2002. If you did not get a chance to try some of these in your own garden this year, look for them in garden centers next spring. 2003 AAS winners should be announced later this year. For more information about other All America Selections winners visit their web site at: http://www.all-americaselections.org/.

Sweet Basil

An ornamental, edible sweet basil with a clearly refined plant size and shape, 'Magical Michael' plants are uniform and reliably 15 inches tall and 16-17 inches wide. This uniformity is rare in sweet basil plants. The lush aromatic, green leaves can be harvested within 30 days of

transplanting and are rich in essential oils for cooking. Plants may flower when mature in about 80 to 90 days from seed. The small flowers are a curiosity since the calices are purple and corollas white. They are attractive for use as a garnish, adding color to any salad.

Slicing Cucumber
Sweet flavor and high yield describe the improved qualities of 'Diva.' The fruit will be sweet, non-bitter with a crisp texture when harvested at 4 to 5 inches. Normally seedless, a few seeds may grow if pollinated by other cuke plants. 'Diva' produces all female flowers and does not require pollen to set fruit. These traits result in high yields. Expect mature cukes in about 58 days from sowing seed in warm soil. Plants are resistant to scab and tolerant to powdery and downy mildews. 'Diva' is the only slicing cucumber you need to grow in your garden.

Pumpkins
Children will be infatuated with 'Orange Smoothie' pumpkins. The dark orange, smooth skin is ideal for painting Halloween faces. The size is desirable for young hands, weighing 5 to 8 pounds with a strong, long handle. 'Orange Smoothie' pumpkins will mature early, in about 90 days from sowing seed. Another benefit is the semi-determinate habit requiring less space in the garden. Easy-to-grow from seed or started plants, 'Orange Smoothie' is an all-around great pumpkin for carving, painting, decorating and even the meat is sweet for homemade pumpkin pie.

'Sorcerer' is a full sized pumpkin, weighing 15 to 22 pounds but produced on a compact vine reaching only 10 feet. The dark orange pumpkins are a deep round shape sporting strong, long handles. 'Sorcerer' pumpkins will mature in about 100 days from sowing seed. Good crown set can be expected with overall high yielding plants. 'Sorcerer' can be grown using normal pumpkin culture. Pumpkins can be carved, painted or used for pie filling.

Squash
If you have never eaten a Delicata squash, this is the one to grow to eat. The orange flesh color indicates it is rich in Vitamin A. The sweet flesh is fine textured without coarse strings. Butter and brown sugar are optional when eating 'Cornell's Bush Delicata' squash because it is so sweet. The squash have a long shelf life, meaning you can enjoy eating the squash into the winter months. About 100 days from sowing to harvest, the tolerance to powdery mildew will increase overall yield. The compact habit requires less garden space. The mature bush will send out 4 to 6 foot runners later in the season.

2003 All-America Rose Selections (AARS) Winner

Hot Cocoa™
Gardeners will be debating the color of Hot Cocoa, a very novel brownish-orange Floribunda washed with smoke on the top and a deep rusty orange on the underside. How about "smoky chocolate orange?"

In any case, people of all ages are attracted to Hot Cocoa, whose pointed buds of deep rust unfurl to reveal the color that some call "cinnamon brown" and which often takes on a purply cast.

Large four-inch flowers hold their color and tolerate heat very well. Tom Carruth hybridized this vigorous, disease-resistant rose by crossing Playboy and Altissimo with Livin' Easy. Weeks Wholesale Rose Grower is the introducer.

Whisper™
Hybrid Tea lovers will find the pureness of Whisper's white color most attractive, one of the most stunning white roses introduced in the past decade. Developed by Colin Dickson in Ireland, Whisper enchants the viewer with classically formed flowers of creamy white with dark green, semi-glossy leaves. Very resistant to disease, Whisper is equally at home as a specimen plant or in a cutting garden. This sophisticated rose will grow up to 5½ feet by 4 feet and boasts five-inch flowers.

Dickson hybridized this distinctive Hybrid Tea from a combination of MACyefre and DICjana. Jackson & Perkins Wholesale is introducing this award-winning rose in the United States.

Cherry Parfait™
The 2003 Grandiflora winner, Cherry Parfait, takes maximum advantage of its shrubby appearance as the background for its very showy color. White petals with a broad red edge create a treat for the eyes. Excellent in all climates, Cherry Parfait's loose habit makes it a perfect companion plant in the garden for perennials and shrubbery.

Seemingly always in bloom, this attractive bicolor rose is attractive throughout the season, accented by its dark foliage. With its massive dose of color and dark foliage, Cherry Parfait also is an effective container plant.

Very effective in a mass planting because of its outstanding color combination, Cherry Parfait was hybridized by the famed house of Meilland from a combination of Meidanu and Macman with Meichoiju. The Conard-Pyle Company is the introducer.

Eureka™
Eureka, which is nearly as wide as it is tall, provides a sparkling hedge-type look with its glittering gold hues. The 3½ foot tall AARS award-winning floribunda offers a beautiful old-fashioned looking bloom of rich apricot yellow with four-inch flowers.

In groups of three or five, Eureka offers a golden anchor to the border, a centerpiece or accent area. It will become very popular because of its abundant blooms, exceptional reblooming ability, glossy green leaves, easy-to-grow vigor, and light fragrance.

The Kordes Company hybridized Eureka from Bernstein Rose and Sun Flare. Jackson & Perkins Wholesale is introducing the 2003 AARS winner.

For more information regarding other All-America Rose Selections visit their web site at http://www.rose.org/.

Master Gardener Corner

David Hillock

Attention County Extension Educators - State Master Gardener Advisory Committee Meeting

We will hold a **State Master Gardener Advisory Committee** meeting on **December 12, 2002** in Oklahoma City. All Extension Coordinators who are coordinating Master Gardener programs in their county are automatically considered committee members and are invited to attend the meeting. If you are not currently conducting a Master Gardener program but have interest in doing so, you are also welcome to attend. Paul Johnson, Oklahoma County Extension Educator, has offered to host the meeting. We plan to meet in the morning for discussion, eat lunch, and then continue our discussion after lunch. The basic outline for the agenda including time, location, and topics will be sent to you soon. However, we are seeking your input for specific items to be discussed. This meeting is for you to express concerns, make suggestions, or share ideas.

Oklahoma Master Gardener Program continues to grow.

This training year will include **6 new counties** participating in the Oklahoma Master Gardener program. This will bring us to **32 counties** with active Master Gardener programs. Joining us this year will be joint training with Jackson, Harmon, Greer, and Kiowa in the southwest corner of the state and Latimer and Haskell Counties joining Pittsburg County on the east side in January. Welcome! I look forward to working with each one of you.

Upcoming Events

Multi-State Ornamental Plant Materials Conference
September 25-26, 2002
Holiday Inn, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Tree Care Workshop
November 15, 2002
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Specialty Cut Flowers
February 27, 2003
Stillwater, Oklahoma

2003 Oklahoma Grape Management Class
Oklahoma Fruit Research Station, Perkins, Oklahoma

2003 Pecan Management Class
Oklahoma Pecan Research Station, Perkins, Oklahoma

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or steph@okstate.edu.