



UWA Turf Research Newsletter

Number 2 Volume 10 June 2012

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Welcome

Welcome to Sam Flottman! Sam has commenced as Research Officer for HAL Project TU11012 *Effectively Utilising Water Allocations*. Sam is a graduate from the Faculty of Natural & Agricultural Sciences (UWA), and has worked in horticulture/turfgrass industries, and also as a technician in agricultural research.

Water Allocation Project: Update

Late autumn provides an opportunity for UWA research staff to prepare the turfgrass plots for winter, plus service and upgrade the site's travelling boom irrigator. Below we thank various Industry members who have helped us with maintenance of the UWA Turf Research Facility in the past months.

UWA staff and the project's subcommittee have also been busy finalising the different approaches that will be used for allocating water to the turfgrass plots. The study will investigate the effect of three allocations rates (5000, 6250, 7500 kL ha⁻¹ year⁻¹) on turfgrass growth and quality, and at the same time examine three approaches to distributing these allocations during the irrigation season. Further details of our irrigation treatments will be provided in the September newsletter.

Thankyou WA Turf Industry

A number of individuals and businesses have volunteered their time and services to the UWA Turf Research Programme over the past few months. These contributions are invaluable as it ensures that our research remains relevant to the WA Turf Industry, and decreases our operating costs.

Thank you to: **Chris Marsh** (UWA, McGillivray Oval) for checking on our irrigation system during summer. **Tom Marsh** (UWA, McGillivray Oval) for fertilising the site, and showing Sam the 'ins-and-outs' of our spreader. **Jeff Lane** (Globe) applied Barricade to the site in early autumn, and so we are hoping to see less wintergrass in the plots. **Aaron Pittaway** (MowMaster) serviced our high-cut mower, and also gave Sam some pointers on its use and

maintenance. **Tony Guy** (TGGA) helped us with, and loaned equipment for, marking the plots.

Soft Leaf Buffalo Project: Final Report

The final report for HAL Project TU09005 *Evaluation of Soft-leaf Buffalograss Cultivars: Renovation, Mowing Heights and Water Use* was submitted and accepted by HAL. The report communicates the key findings of experiments which assessed: (i) the responses of 12 buffalograss genotypes to two renovation treatments - either a hard rotary mow, or verti-mow with light sanding; (ii) the influence of mowing height on water use by four warm-season turfgrass species; and (iii) turfgrass performance under one-day-per-week watering during summer.



Buffalograss genotypes withstood 'severe' renovation using a rotary mower to cut the thatch down to 10 mm above the soil surface, although the turfgrass was brown for a few weeks until leaves re-grew. By contrast, verti-mown surfaces did not brown-off but also showed less improvement in surface firmness.

Water use increased as mowing height was raised for four turfgrasses (couch, kikuyu, buffalograss, zoysia); for example, the average across all four species for water use was 66% of pan evaporation when cut at 10 mm and 73% when cut at 50 mm (summer 2 data). The lower mowing height resulted in more clippings. One-day-per-week watering during summer resulted in brown turfgrass within a few weeks. The four turfgrasses (couch, kikuyu, buffalograss, zoysia) were similar in their responses, and all four were able to recover after an entire summer under this regime.

The report is available from Horticulture Australia Ltd.

If you would like further information about the UWA Turf Research Program, please contact A/Prof Louise Barton (louise.barton@uwa.edu.au; 6488 2543) or Prof Tim Colmer (timothy.colmer@uwa.edu.au).