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FACTS OF LAWN LIFE....

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A winter to remember: what caused it and how does it affect spring?

I don't think anyone needs to read a re-hash of what we went through since November, but the severity of the cold, and what caused it and how it could impact our spring, is worth looking at. Lawn Life now subscribes to a monthly newsletter written by world renowned Evelyn Browning-Garriss. Evelyn Browning-Garriss is a historical climatologist who advises everyone from Texas cattle raisers to Midwestern utilities and Canadian banks about what the coming season will bring.

As of early March, Great Lakes ice cover exceeded 92%, which to give some perspective, in 2002 was 9.5%.(typical ice cover is 50%). Ice now covers over 225,000 sq km. This will have an impact on our Ontario spring weather. (EBG predicts Ontario planting weather will be delayed 2 weeks) The colder water temperatures will moderate both air temperatures and humidity in the Great Lakes region in the coming months.

So what caused this frigid winter? The reason-an extremely volatile jet stream. This winter, the jet stream plunged deep into the American mid-west. The change in its typical pattern is largely due

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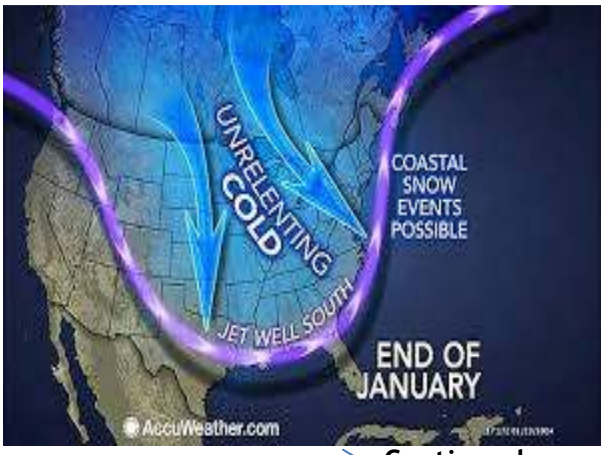

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Debunking Endophytes...courtesy OMAFRA factsheet

The word endophyte keeps cropping up in magazine articles, talks and in seed advertisements. Associated with it are all sorts of claims of insect resistance, stress tolerance, etc. This article will attempt to give you the facts as well as point out some precautions when buying seed containing endophyte

What is an Endophyte? An endophyte is a fungus which grows inside a plant. The endophytes that we are most concerned with are the ones growing inside a turfgrass plant. These endophytes, unlike disease causing fungi, do not cause any harm to the turfgrass plant. Currently, endophytes have been found in tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, hard fescue, chewing fescue and creeping red fescue. There are no known endophytes occurring in Kentucky bluegrass or creeping bent grass. Endophytes are found in all parts of the plant except the roots with the highest concentration found in the leaf sheath.

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Seed supply and pricing for 2014

You may or may not know that Lawn Life buys the large majority of its seed directly from Oregon or Western Canada. We have a direct pipeline which not only keeps our costs down, but gives us a communication channel on what's happening with supply and pricing.

We have been told by more than one grower that the '13 Oregon seed crop wasn't the best, and yields were down. Acreage devoted to grass seed was also down. Couple those with the fact inventory within the "system" that by enlarge was used up in 2013. Indeed, prices started going up last fall, and continued to rise over the winter. Our sagging Canadian dollar has added to the issue, with the net result of increases of fresh stock hitting well into the 20% range and more. Perennial Ryegrass is in short supply, and already there is widespread concern that fall supplies will be very, very tight.

Sources and inventories of the various seed suppliers varies, so if your pricing reflects a minimal increase, it is likely due to stock remaining from 2013, or some very prudent buying in the fall.

We carry blends for sun, shade, general overseeding, and creeping tall fescue.

For a list of our seed blends available, contact us directly.

This is not your average perennial ryegrass…….

Natural Knit creeping perennial ryegrass has faired well in GTI trials to date. Ongoing research has shown a marked reduction in grub damage when compared to a traditional home lawn mix that conntains Kentucky Bluegrass.

NATURAL KNIT

We have revamped our Web site!

The information from the previous version is all there, but check for new updates on industry news and Lawn Life products.

www.lawnlifenaturalturfproducts.com

Sports Turf Managers:
The 2011 NTEP trials for perennial ryegrass provide unique insight in how various cultivars perform under a variety of conditions and locations.

Contact Ken Pavely for a PDF copy of them as well as how Natural Knit cultivars performed.

Weather Continued…..

due to previous volcanic activity in other parts of the world. Volcanic eruptions spew ash and chemicals into the atmosphere, and if carried high enough into the stratosphere, create moisture and cloud cover. Arctic temperatures plunged. A warmer north Pacific pushed the eastward flowing polar jet stream further north. That much colder air in the Arctic then descended upon us with unrelenting voracity. Our American friends in the Northeast got a double whammy with record snowfall, thanks to the above factors and a warmer Atlantic clashing to produce snow and ice storms.

The effects of volcanic activity on our weather is something the media seldom reports. It was once thought that only major eruptions had profound effects on weather, but that thinking has changed. Smaller, more numerous events are now showing to be weather changers, and these eruptions are not forecasted to slow down in the next few years.

As this has been a winter to remember, our thoughts turn to its effect on perennial ryegrass survival. Once the soils begin to warm up, we will see how the rye has handled the extended cover of ice and snow.

A projected cooler spring, along with its later arrival will put a decided crimp on establishing turf from seed in April and early May.

Sports Turf managers who rely heavily on perennial ryegrass may find fields with plenty of dead grass to replace. For my soccer fields in Uxbridge, I have already booked overseeding services this spring, in anticipation of increased winter kill.

For golf supers, only time will tell how well greens and fairways did beneath the ice cover. Pam's blog reported a mixed bag of findings so far.

Useful Links:

IPM Symposium:
http://www.horttrades.com/congress-presentations-2014

Many of the day's presentations are on this page and include but not limited to:

- Pam Charbonneau's seed trials
- Michael Brownbridge on his trials on biological pesticides and the role of grass types on grub feeding
- Dave Smith on soil management
- Tree and shrub topics

At the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium, a speaker, Dr. Sean Lyons from the U of Guelph (no, not Eric Lyons) gave a fabulous talk on employee relations with the different generations..ie MIllennials, Gen X'ers, Boomers).

Being able to relate to your employees, no matter what age they are, is a skill that all of us can get better at. Here is the link to his paper that is well worth reading….

http://gencareershift.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Generationalcareershift-Final-Report-Nov-2011.pdf

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Check out Pam Charbonneau's blog and sign up for her regular updates…

https://onturf.wordpress.com/author/onturf/

Endophytes and Insect Tolerance

The discovery that high endophyte grasses were resistant to insect feeding was accidental. A study in New Zealand was looking at the effect of endophytes on sheep grazing. After this study it was discovered that when the tall fescue was growing in after grazing that the endophyte free tall fescue was being attacked by a grass pest called the Argentine Stem Weevil but the high endophyte plot was not attacked.

Since this chance discovery many research reports on turfgrass species containing endophytes have shown that they enhance resistance to surface feeding insects including sod webworm, bill bugs and chinch bugs. The endophyte either produces a poison or makes the plant produce a chemical which repels insects that feed on turf. Studies have shown that the amount of insect resistance is directly proportional to the percentage of endophyte living within the turfgrass plant.

Effect of Seed Storage on Endophytes

The endophytic fungus which is present in turfgrass seed at the time of harvest can lose its viability very quickly if it is not stored under proper conditions. The storage conditions necessary to maintain endophyte viability in the seed are cool dry conditions. According to some studies conducted with tall fescue at a temperature of 5°C seed containing 100% endophytic fungi can be stored up to 15 months without losing the viability of the endophytes. On the other hand endophytic seed stored at 21°C will lose 40% of its endophytes in 7 months and all of its endophytes in 11 months.

NEWS FLASH:

Word has just come out that **Phoma Macrostoma**, the biological broadleaf weed herbicide registered by Scotts will not be coming to the marketplace.
As we have seen in the recent past, producing a biological herbicide in large quantities that can meet market pricing levels can be challenging, and we have been told that Phoma is simply too expensive to reproduce.

While many will be disappointed with this recent development, research for botanical and biological broadleaf weed controls for turf does continue!

If you have an opinion or topic of interest please let drop us a line. Please check our website for products, and remember that we are ready, willing and able to assist in any way possible.

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