

The Garden And Landscape Section

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The Garden and Landscape section of the Florida State Horticultural Society has been created this year in response to a growing need for greater coverage of Florida horticulture by the society. Originally the Florida State Horticultural Society was a society of amateurs and professional horticulturists from all walks of life and covering all phases of horticulture. Papers were presented by individuals who grew plants as a hobby or business rather than by those who were carrying out scientific research on plants. Much valuable information was gained from keen observation.

Over the years horticulture in Florida has become more professionalized and this trend has been reflected in the Society. The sections of the Society have gradually become more and more rigid partially due to the dominance of certain fields such as citriculture. This gradual change in the Society has tended to discourage the amateur from taking an active part in the proceedings. He felt that his backyard observations compared unfavorably with a scientifically laid out experiment the results of which were analyzed statistically. Yet astute horticulturists realize that the field is so large that there will always be a place for the observations of amateurs. Indeed much of the progress in horticulture has been due to observations of amateurs and there is no doubt that this will continue to be the case.

For a number of years there have been various members of the Society such as E. A. Menninger who felt that there should be more amateur representation in the Society. The movement culminated in a letter in 1970 from Robert L. Egolf to Frank E. Gardner, then president of the Society. Frank Gardner then appointed Charles A. Conover to head a committee to explore the possibilities of forming a new section of the Society.

The committee made the following proposal:

Proposal for addition of a "Garden and Landscape" section to the Florida State Horticultural Society.

Purpose

To provide growers, advanced hobbyists and technical and nontechnical members the opportunity to present information applicable to the development and enhancement of Florida landscapes.

Need

Florida is second only to California in production and use of ornamentals, yet has no vehicle for dissemination statewide of landscape horticultural information. Presently the ornamentals section is occupied predominantly with highly technical papers leaving little room for much needed contributions by interested individuals outside of DPI or IFAS. This new section will provide interested individuals an opportunity to publish.

Organization

I. This section would be organized similar to other sections of the Society.

II. The first year a vice president of the section would be appointed by the executive committee of the Society. In subsequent years the vice president would be elected.

III. The appointed vice president will appoint a review committee and require that completed papers be submitted at the time abstracts are normally required. The review committee will be composed of the vice president, Ornamentals Section, plus two other people selected by the Garden and Landscape vice president. This system would allow review of all papers and allow inclusion only of those meeting acceptable standards of the Society. This system seems appropriate as papers from other sections are normally reviewed by internal committees of IFAS, DPI and various other organizations.

IV. Papers submitted will be subjected to the same page requirements as exists in other sections of the Society.

V. The first year and during subsequent years, the number of papers accepted will depend on those meeting requirements of the Society. An attempt will be made to obtain at least eight papers

the first year—these will be both invitational and papers submitted through normal channels.

This proposal was accepted by the executive committee and then approved by the society at their business meeting in 1971.

The committee anticipated that the new section

would develop gradually with more papers presented each year until after several years the section would become equal to the other sections. It was also anticipated that the new section would bring new members into the Society.

SUPERIOR LAWNS FOR SOUTH FLORIDA

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Abstract. Successful lawns in South Florida are largely limited to a few grass species of which St. Augustinegrass is by far the most popular. More depends on the successful starting of a lawn than on anything else. Thereafter, correct and timely control of watering, insect pests and plant diseases are essential; as is a mowing and top dressing schedule planned to avoid "thatching" with consequent build-up of conditions favoring insects and disease.

A very important phase of home landscaping is the establishing and maintaining of a good lawn. Only four or five grasses are adapted to South Florida conditions (4) and St. Augustine is easily in first place (5).

Bermuda, Zoysia, Centipede and Bahia make satisfactory lawns if managed properly but St. Augustine is less expensive to maintain. The following information pertains to St. Augustinegrass.

Preplanting requirements are often neglected. Minimum effort is often made to rough grade and place sod. This method leads to troubles for years to come. Proper steps are the following: Remove construction debris, achieve rough grade, add amendments if soil is excessively rocky or sandy. Install permanent irrigation system, add fertilizer at the rate of 40 pounds per thousand square feet, finish grading, place quality sod (having minimum percentage of weeds, insects, disease or nematodes). Solid sodding is the common practice.

St. Augustinegrass seed is not available locally.

After the lawn is established care and attention are necessary in order to maintain an excel-

lent turf. This care includes proper mowing, watering and fertilization. No one factor is more important than the other. To maintain a strong root system and normal top growth for most South Florida soils, the rate of fertilizer to use and the frequency of applications are prime factors to consider.

For an established lawn, provide one pound of nitrogen per application to each 1,000 square feet of lawn. This would be 16 pounds of 6-6-6 or 12.5 pounds of 8-8-8 or ten pounds of 10-10-10 or 11 pounds of 9-6-6. Too much fertilizer contributes to build-up of "thatch" while too little starves the grass.

The number of fertilizer applications per year depends on the lawn appearance desired. If the turf is dense enough, and the color is good, postpone the application.

A guide of long standing is to apply a complete fertilizer in the Spring and Fall.

If cold damage is experienced in the winter in South Florida use five pounds of ammonium sulfate per one thousand square feet to regain color quickly.

If the lawn loses vigor or is off-color in the summer time use a sewage sludge, cotton seed meal, castor pomace or other organic type of fertilizer at the rate of 15 to 25 pounds of material per thousand square feet of area.

While somewhat more expensive than mineral forms of nitrogen, water insoluble organics have advantages for the home dweller that should outweigh the cost difference. These forms of nitrogen are more slowly available to plants and growth rate should be reduced accordingly. This slower rate of growth should produce a hardier, more desirable type of turf. Slower availability means less leaching of nutrients during periods of heavy rainfall. A further advantage is that these materials contain a helpful supply of minor elements.

In ornamental turf the objective is to produce a healthy, attractive cover of grass with as

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