

Hurricane Charley Update

Agricultural interests in south-west and central Florida were hard hit recently by Hurricane Charley. One of our licensed producers, Bethel Farms of Arcadia, FL, sustained significant damage to crops and infrastructure. Although it will take months to redo what Charley undid, the spirit of the people at Bethel is incredible. They will get it done.

Sod Solutions would like to thank the many licensed producers and friends who have volunteered money, equipment, supplies and manpower to assist Bethel and the people of their community. Thanks also for the many prayers and concerns you've expressed. To the people of Bethel Farms... truly you are an inspiration!

Sapphire Looks "Incredible"!

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Additionally, shade tolerance information is expected from Dr. Clint Waltz's work being done on several cultivars, including Sapphire, at the University of Georgia's Griffin Station.

Although there are more observations and analysis to be done, Sapphire, in the words of one SSCE collaborator, is looking "Incredible". Sod Solutions will keep you posted on how Sapphire overwinters and any other important SSCE developments. Additionally, our team will continue to try new and innovative programs for the development and release of turfgrasses that will make your farm more profitable.

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Sapphire Looks "Incredible"! 
Comparative Evaluations Continue...Early Data Promising**Fall Fertilization - Getting Ready for Winter**

By Roberto Gurgel

As the fall season gets closer, it is time to prepare your grass for winter and its challenges. Mother Nature sends clear signs that it is getting ready, too. It is time to give lawns the last fertilization before they shut down for winter. We should add nitrogen (N) not to help the grass grow, but to encourage the creation of carbohydrates for winter/spring use. Therefore, not as much N as we put on in spring and summer. Excess N will not be used by the plant, leading to runoff and waste of money, and can be harmful to the grass; forcing artificial growth, instead of storing sugars. It can even develop conditions for disease problems. Rates will vary with location and variety. Also, remember to use potassium (K), which will benefit the grass at this time. It is very unlikely that you will need phosphorus (P), but if your soil analysis demand some P, make sure you get a balanced formula.



Balanced N and K: let's follow nature's signs

The Sapphire St. Augustine Comparative Evaluations (SSCE) are in full swing and observations to date have confirmed several important characteristics of the new cultivar. Since April, test plots have been established at 22 sites throughout the US (see Table 1 on page 2) including universities and production/research facilities. Dr. Dave Han, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist - Auburn University, is administering the test and will publish comprehensive statistical analysis in spring 2005 and 2006. One goal of the SSCE is to collaborate with universities in the southern US and Sod Solutions is thrilled to be working with no less than six universities and eight turfgrass research/extension specialists.

From observations made to date, Sapphire has demonstrated the following characteristics when compared to local St. Augustinegrass standards:

- i **Rapid Grow-in...**Most Sapphire plots are achieving 100% coverage within 100 days after planting... significantly faster than the other SSCE varieties.
- ii **Deep Blue-green Color...** In comparison to Raleigh, Floratam and Palmetto, Sapphire's color is strikingly different.
- iii **Enhanced Drought Resistance?...** At some sites, when exposed to droughty conditions, Sapphire has been observed to wilt less than other varieties present. More work will be done on this characteristic in year two of the SSCE.

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Sapphire Looks "Incredible"!



Continued From Page 1

- **Excellent Turf Quality...**
The majority of sites report that Sapphire is demonstrating the best visual quality of all the cultivars...even during the high-stress summer months.
- **Gray Leaf Spot Resistance...**
Several sites have reported reduced occurrences of this disease in comparison to the other varieties. Evaluation of this characteristic will continue as well.

developed during Sapphire's breeding. Sod Solutions is excited about the continuation of the SSCE through fall 2004 and into winter/spring/summer of 2005. Specifically, data related to climatic adaptability and shade tolerance will be at a premium. Fully 1/3 of the SSCE sites are in areas where St. Augustine is not used extensively due to climatic considerations. These sites, as well as the full range of locations, will provide invaluable cold/heat tolerance information.

The observations to date are by no means conclusive, but they do support the characteristics identified and

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Table 1 - SSCE Sites and Evaluators

Site	Location	Varieties				Evaluator
		Sapphire	Palmetto	Raleigh	Floritam	
AU - Auburn	Auburn, AL	X	X	X	X	Dr. Dave Hon - AU
UF - West Florida	Joy, FL	X	X	X	X	Dr. Bryan Unruh - UF
LSU - Burden	Baton Rouge, LA	X	X	X		Dr. David Lee - LSU
UGA - Griffin	Griffin, GA	X	X	X	X	Dr. Clint Waltz - UGA
UT - Martin	Martin, TN	X	X	X		Dr. Terry Vassey - UTM
VT - Hampton Roads	Virginia Beach, VA	X	X	X		Dr. Jeffrey Derr - VT
Bethel Farms	Arcadia, FL	X	X		X	Joel Lane
H&H Sod	Kenansville, FL	X	X		X	Joel Lane
Sod Solutions Research	Mt Pleasant, SC	X	X	X		Greg Douglas
Carolina Turf	Raeford, NC	X	X	X		Greg Douglas
Southern Belle	Zuni, VA	X	X	X		Tom Serensits - VT
Double Springs Grass Farms	Searcy, AR	X	X	X		Chris Friedrich
Cane Creek Sod	Cardwell, MO	X	X	X		Brad Williams
Del's Nursery & Landscape	San Antonio, TX	X	X	X		Roberto Gurgel
Wittig Grass Farms	Boling, TX	X	X	X		Roberto Gurgel
Trinity Turf Nursery	Pilot Point, TX	X	X	X		Roberto Gurgel
Murff Turf Farms	Crosby, TX	X	X	X		Roberto Gurgel
Gardner Turfgrass	Santa Teresa, NM	X	X	X		Dr. Bernd Leinauer - NMSU
Evergreen Turf	Tempe, AZ	X	X	X		Donnie Shaffer
Craft Farms	Foley, AL	X	X	X		Dr. Bryan Unruh - UF
Turf Grass Farms	Welsh, LA	X	X	X		Dr. Tom Kaske - LSU

Greg Douglas
Vice President

Tech Talk

New E-Newsletter and Other Marketing Materials
Take Advantage of Marketing Tools Available to YouSis Reda
Director of Marketing

Market Rap

In June Sod Solutions launched *GreenNews Online*, a newsletter devoted to Sod Solutions product developments and other industry news. *GreenNews* is sent out monthly via e-mail to some 900 recipients across the U.S., including landscape architects, landscape contractors, sportsturf managers, golf course superintendents, media representatives, licensed turfgrass producers, university staff, professional associations, and others. The goal of the publication is to provide timely information to key buyers and prospective buyers of turfgrasses. *GreenNews* also frequently includes information about VersaScapes horticultural products. VersaScapes is Sod Solutions "sister" company, and has developed a line of ornamental grasses and the Instant Border™ plant packaging system. If you would like us to add your customers and other professional contacts to the mailing list, e-mail that information to ataylor@sodsolutions.com with your request.

One of our primary marketing goals this year is to develop additional materials that would promote the Sod Solutions varieties. Accordingly, and with the licensed producers in mind, we have produced a number of new marketing support items that are available for your use. Additionally, existing items have been updated or enhanced. All of the following items are available for your use, either as printed copies or in electronic format.

- Sales sheets for Palmetto, EMPIRE, Celebration, and Sapphire
- Turfgrass logo posters
- Celebration and EMPIRE references/installation site lists (updated)
- Digital photos – many photos of all kinds have been added to our files this

Marketing Highlights
May - August 2004

May

- 7 Ads in Industry Publications
- "Neil Sperry" Statewide Radio Advertising, Texas

June

- 6 Ads in Industry Publications
- "Neil Sperry" Statewide Radio Advertising, Texas
- *GreenNews Online* E-Newsletter Launched; National Distribution
- Celebration, EMPIRE Reference/Site Lists Updated

July

- 6 Ads in Industry Publications
- "Neil Sperry" Statewide Radio Advertising, Texas
- Product Catalog Printed and Released
- Florida Assoc. of Landscape Architects Conference & Trade Show – July 29-31, Daytona Beach, Florida
- TPI Summer Conference, July 25-30, Harrisburg, PA
- *GreenNews Online* E-Newsletter

August

- 7 Ads in Industry Publications
- "Better Lawns" Statewide Radio Advertising, Florida
- Texas Nursery & Landscape Expo – Aug. 20-22, Houston, TX

year, including close-ups, landscape shots, production photos, and more. You may also download photos from sodsolutions.com; and we can send you others from our electronic files.

- Recent university turfgrass research results; posted at sodsolutions.com

Please contact Sis Reda, sreda@sodsolutions.com or 843.849.1288 if you would like more information.