

Talkin' Turkey with Rhyne Select

Rhyne Select Turf of Benton, AL has a unique way of combining recreation and customer relations. Rhyne Select will sometimes offer a turkey hunt, deer hunt or other off-time outdoor recreation to customers, in an effort to get to know them better, build genuine relationships, and have a little bit of fun in the process.

"It's a nice opportunity to get to know someone outside of the normal work routine," said John Mays of Rhyne Select. "We have gone out with fathers and sons, too. Some of the boys are as young as 11, and have been very pleased and proud of their results."

The pictures on this page are from April 2005, and show John Mays (wearing hat) and Chuck Kelly, a landscape architect from Birmingham, AL.



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Roberto Gurgel,
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2005 International Producers Meeting

Special Reports, Sapphire St. Augustine Are Highlights

Irrigation During Summer

By Roberto Gurgel

Along with hot, nice summer days comes the concern of irrigating lawns properly.



A lawn does not have to be watered every other day. In fact, it is beneficial for turfgrass to be under slight water stress. This stress will force the roots to grow more deeply in the soil as they search for moisture. That will help the grass in the future to better use water if it is only available deep down in the soil. So, don't spoil your lawn root system by adding too much water.

In the case of a lawn that is not yet established, remember to look for turf varieties that naturally use less water. EMPIRE Zoysia and Celebration Bermudagrass are good examples of varieties that will use less water, as compared to other varieties.

Also use rain wisely, as an ally. Use your local forecast, and plan to skip irrigation intervals that were planned.

For more watering tips and additional maintenance suggestions, contact Sod Solutions for copies of Best Management Practices Sheets (BMPs) for each variety, or visit sodsolutions.com.

Licensed producers from the U.S. and Australia met in Daytona Beach, Florida on April 28 for the latest updates on Sod Solutions programs and varieties, and to share information and networking opportunities.

Approximately 70 people attended the afternoon meeting: producers, representatives from Auburn University and the University of Florida, representatives of the Florida Sod Growers Cooperative, special guests and others. The meeting included an update on the Sapphire introduction, SSCE interim report, tech updates and more. The meeting was unique in several respects, including that it was attended by Australian producers visiting the U.S. for a week-long tour of farms and special sites. A detailed description of the visit and the producers' meeting is found in a special insert in this issue of The Fish Wrap.

Linda Moyer Joins Sod Solutions


Linda Moyer has joined Sod Solutions as Executive Assistant. Linda will have administrative responsibilities, and will also provide support for licensing and trademarking activities. Prior to joining Sod Solutions, Linda was employed by East Cooper Baptist Church of Mt. Pleasant, SC as Financial Secretary.

Linda is doing a great job with her new responsibilities and getting to know our licensed producers. Please join us in welcoming her to the company, and introduce yourself to her if you "meet" her for the first time on the telephone.



Missing A Copy Of The Fish Wrap?
Back Issues Are Posted
On The Producer Page At
www.sodsolutions.com

Bottom Line: Sapphire is a Great Grass



Quality Ratings, Coverage, Color are Superior

In April 2004, comparative evaluations (SSCE) began for the purpose of quantifying Sapphire St. Augustine's characteristics. Since that time, at twenty one evaluation sites across the southern US, including sod farms and university research plots, Sapphire has been evaluated alongside other St. Augustines: Raleigh, Floratam and Palmetto.

Specific testing protocol has included:

- Pre-plant herbicide application
- Plot dimensioning and configuration
- Replication instruction
- Establishment regimen
- Maintenance guidelines

The test sites and the evaluation program are being managed under the oversight of Dr. Dave Han of Auburn University.

We have previously published the 90 DAP result for the evaluation program (*Fish Wrap*, Issue 12, Winter '05). Dr. Han presented preliminary results for the one-year interval this past April at the Sod Solutions International Producers Meeting in Daytona Beach. Information included:

- Sapphire has had a very rapid growth rate, more rapid than the other St. Augustines being tested.

Notes on Licensing for Sapphire St. Augustine

Sapphire is being released in Florida via a Joint Release agreement between the Florida Sod Growers Cooperative (FSGC) and Sod Solutions. Through this agreement, program administration, marketing and revenues will be shared by the two entities. The initial Florida licensing period was May 1–July 31, 2005. New licensing requests will be evaluated individually. Sapphire licensing will be available on a pre-release status in other states as the program rolls out in 2005. Contact Sod Solutions if you are interested in becoming a licensed Sapphire St. Augustine producer.

- Sapphire has demonstrated superior quality to Raleigh and Floratam in summer/early fall months. Palmetto seems to have the most superior quality rating in early spring.
- Sapphire had darker green color than the other varieties in the first summer after planting.
- Sapphire holds color better in fall than Raleigh or Palmetto.
- Sapphire may be slower to emerge from dormancy than Raleigh or Palmetto. Continued evaluation could confirm or revise this preliminary observation, or others.

Dr. Han noted in his report that, while all findings are still preliminary, Sapphire has so far shown the most aggressive growth and highest summertime quality of the varieties in the SSCE. A complete copy of Dr. Han's Interim Report is available via email from Sod Solutions. The evaluation will continue through this summer and beyond, and the grasses can now be compared under more "normal" maintenance conditions. Continuing evaluation will include current testing criteria, and will also include drought stress tolerance, winter transitioning, shade tolerance, and monitoring of any pest problems.



Left
SSCE Test Plots
like this one are
in place at 21
U.S. sites.



Greg Douglas
Vice President

Tech Talk

Marketing RoundUp

Upcoming Industry Events

Turfgrass Conferences and other green industry events are a cornerstone of the ongoing marketing support for our varieties. We have found that selective participation in key industry events has generated increases in brand awareness, inquiries and sales.

We have scheduled attendance and/or trade show exhibition at the following upcoming events through the fall:

- Southern Nursery & Landscape Show – Aug. 11-13, Atlanta, GA
- Florida Turfgrass Assoc. Conference & Show – Sept. 10-15, Bonita Springs, FL
- Florida Landscape Architects Executive Committee Meeting – Sept. 24, Tampa, FL
- Florida Nursery & Allied Trades – Sept. 29 – Oct. 1, Orlando, FL
- Nat'l. Assoc. of Landscape Architects Conference – Oct. 7-11, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- TX Turfgrass Assoc. Conference - Dec. 12-13, San Antonio, TX

As we go to press on this issue of *The Fish Wrap*, Sod Solutions staff are also attending the Texas Turfgrass Association Summer Conference and preparing to depart for TPI's Summer Conference in Salt Lake City at the end of July.

Trade show preparation includes a variety of materials that are available for use by licensed producers. We offer:

- * 4-color Sales Sheets * Brochures
- * Catalogs * Logo Signs / Artwork
- * Poster and Banner Artwork
- * Color Photos for Enlargement
- * Job Site References

This is a partial list of the materials available, and the list is being expanded. If you would like to use any of these items, or would like to suggest new ones, please contact Sis Reda at 843.849.1288 or sreda@sodsolutions.com. If you would like to discuss the potential of Sod Solutions collaboration in an upcoming event, please contact Sis.



Sis Reda
Director of
Marketing

Market Rap

Marketing Highlights

March - July 2005

March

- 3 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- Texas Landscape Architects Assoc. Annual Conference – Austin, TX
- Corpus Christi Home Show – Corpus Christi, TX
- Celebration, EMPIRE Job Site References Updated – Available at sodsolutions.com
- *GreenNews Online* E-Newsletter Published, Distributed by Sod Solutions
- Palmetto, EMPIRE, Celebration, Sapphire Sales Sheets Created for Individual Producers' Use

April

- 3 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- Australian Licensed Producers Visit U.S., Tour Florida – April 23-29
- Sod Solutions International Growers Conference – April 28, Daytona Beach, FL
- FSGC Field Day – April 29, Kirkland Farms, New Smyrna Beach, FL

May

- 4 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- *GreenNews Online* E-Newsletter Distributed

June

- 4 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- "Better Lawns & Gardens" Radio Schedule for Celebration – Florida Radio Network, Continues through October
- New Celebration Radio Commercial Recorded – Available for Local Use
- *GreenNews Online* E-Newsletter Distributed

July

- 4 Ads in Turf Industry Publications
- New Celebration Print Ad Developed; Available for Producer Use
- Turfgrass Producers International Summer Conference - Jul. 26-29, Park City, Utah
- Texas Turfgrass Association Summer Conference - Jul. 17-19, Austin, TX
- "Better Lawns" Radio Schedule Continues
- *GreenNews Online* E-Newsletter Distributed