

About The Farm ---

By John J. Inskeep, County Agent

A resident of West Linn asks about Zoysia as a lawn grass. This is a natural inquiry because this grass has been subjected to a lot of advertising throughout the nation. We first heard of it while traveling in the south in 1947. It was our understanding at that time, that Oregon is too far north for using Zoysia successfully. However, to be sure, we wrote to O.S.C. farm crops specialist Rex Warren, and here is his reply.

"We get numerous inquiries

about Zoysia. Personally, I have never seen this plant grow. However, the best information we can get is that it is a good lawn grass in the deep south, but will not compete in climatic conditions like we have here. Zoysia is sometimes called Japanese carpet grass. It came from Asia and has been cultivated in the gulf states. It is a short, dark green, fine-leaved grass that produces a sod so dense that even crabgrass cannot compete. It grows in the sun or shade

and is fairly salt tolerant, but prefers heavy soil. It needs heavy fertilization for a good turf. It requires about two years to produce good cover and needs little mowing. It turns brown with the first frost.

"Zoysia is propagated principally by cuttings. It is a very poor seed producer. This information is taken from the Forest Service handbook published in 1953."

This incident illustrates the wisdom of checking on the use of new plants prior to making unnecessary expenditures.

Wonder if we are giving reed canary grass the recognition it deserves? We judged hay and grain at the recent Washington State Fair at Puyallup. In the smaller hay sample class there must have been well over a hundred entries in various classes. One of the finest of these, judged from color, smell and general appearance, was reed canary grass.

Reed canary has long had a reputation for being coarse and unpalatable. Our experience leads us to believe that there is little correlation between width of leaf and palatability. Coarse-leaved sudan, for instance, is apparently more palatable than fine-leaved bent grass. Palatability is affected by fertilization and management.

We suspect that the poor reputation attributed to reed canary occurred long before we began using nitrogen-bearing fertilizers. Furthermore, reed canary is one of our highest yielding grasses on wet, heavy soils. We think one would not go wrong by planting reed canary and lotus major on such soils. A little nitrogen would, no doubt, improve palatability for grazing and hay. And then, reed canary has another advantage. Hay cutting may be delayed until July weather when we usually have good hay-making weather.

Why not try a planting on that wet back forty?

How important is spelling in the modern educational program? This question was brought to mind sharply in connection with a sign accompanying an otherwise excellent legume and grass exhibit shown at this same fair. Legume was spelled "leguem."

Grass, legume, and weed exhibits, fresh and mounted, formed an outstanding feature at the Western Washington fair. Moreover, they received lots of attention. Some of the folks had notebooks and spent lots of time making a study of this important attraction.

Among the weed exhibits was one of poison ivy which we see little of on the Pacific coast. Two years ago when we attended the International Grassland Congress, we inspected several farms in eastern Pennsylvania and eastern Maryland. Every unattended fence row was thoroughly infested with this pest which affects so many humans. The same was true in a hardwood farm forest we visited in eastern Maryland. A heavy undercover of poison

ivy covered the ground under the trees.

And here is a strange phenomenon. Cattle are said to eat ivy avidly. It just goes to show that humans can scarcely judge the palatability of plants for farm animals by taste.

Every gunner who hunts deer in eastern Oregon is acquainted with bitter brush. This plant is so palatable to deer, cattle, and

sheep that stands have been completely eradicated in certain areas by overgrazing. To a human being, bitter brush stems and leaves are as bitter as quinine.

The Western Washington fair had a very small but very good corn show. Most samples were raised east of the Cascades, apparently, and were at least a year

old. One of the best came from Australia.

Fair officials up there would like very much for Oregonians to send up more hay and grain exhibits. Apparently we had nary an exhibit in the show this year. Also, they would like for us to hold over exhibits from local and state corn shows for this fair. We are suggesting this

Stork Club

SANDY—Mr. and Mrs. Jim Roper are parents of their third daughter, Janet Lee, born September 25 at Emanuel hospital in Portland. She weighed in at 9 pounds and 4½ ounces.

possibility to Oregon Corn Show officials.

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—Virgil

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