



# Georgia Crop Improvement Association



MEMBER  
Association of Official  
Seed Certifying Agencies  
<http://www.aosca.org>

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## GCIA News Briefs

SUMMER 2019

### **I've Been Thinking**

*Terry Hollifield, Executive Director*

Spring is now summer and the season for vacations, barbecues, picnics, and various other summer activities. It is also that point in time when we in the southeast enjoy high temperatures and high humidity. All in all, I tend to enjoy summer. It is a time when GCIA hits its stride inspecting crops, meeting growers and conditioners, inspector training, etc.

Summer is also a time for professional meetings. Attending the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) annual meeting is one of my favorite events. The association is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary and we are meeting in Chicago where it all began. I suspect AOSCA is one of the least appreciated agricultural sector associations. The lack of appreciation is sad when one considers that it was one of the first organized agricultural associations and is responsible for facilitating seed movement not only across state boundaries but also internationally.

Another one of my favorite meetings is the Georgia/Alabama Seed Association meeting. This year the meeting is being hosted by Alabama and will be held in Gulf Shores, Alabama on July 14 and 15. The Lodge at Gulf State Park will be a great place for not only members but their families as well. Visit the Alabama Seed Association website at [www.alabamaseedassociation.com](http://www.alabamaseedassociation.com) to review the agenda and make reservations.

In past *News Briefs* publications I have tried to express to my readers (both of them...) the importance of attending and participating in agricultural trade associations. I have no way of knowing if I have been successful.

So let me, again, encourage you to travel and attend as many meetings as you can. Take a moment and think (as in "I've Been Thinking") about a quote by Terry Pratchett, noted author and philosopher, "Why do you go away? So that you can see the place you came from with new eyes and extra color."

Trust me, when you travel and interact with people you always bring home a new idea.

## UAC Landscape Alert - Nostoc Algae

*Turfgrass Spring Blog # 4: 2019 Edition – courtesy of the Georgia Urban Ag Council*

By: Clint Waltz, Ph.D., University of Georgia Turfgrass Specialist

With the recent dry weather encouraging the use, and possible overuse, of irrigation systems then the recent tropical conditions – rainfall and humidity – I have had several pictures and questions about a jelly-like substance growing in the turf. The jelly-like "stuff" is a Nostoc algae, a genus of cyanobacterium formerly classified as blue-green algae. It has multiple common names like star jelly, witch's butter, and others.

Under warm temperatures Nostoc may appear suddenly in lawns, and other turf areas, following a period of rain and can be an indication of overwatering. In turf, it is generally on a site where the grass is growing poorly due to severe compaction, overwatering, or both. It does not cause turf decline or death; it colonizes areas where it has favorable growing conditions and the grass was already thin. Poor drainage and compacted soils create a favorable environment for Nostoc. It will dry-out if the water or rainfall diminishes but it has only gone into dormancy. With enough moisture, it will come back to "life".

In its hydrated, gelatinous, green state it can be a safety hazard. It is slippery. Be careful walking on it. However, when it dries-out it can become restrictive to turfgrass growth. Nostoc dries into a black crust that can prevent stolons from rooting, or "tacking", into the soil, delaying turfgrass growth and spread.

Nostoc can be difficult to control. To discourage its growth, encourage the growth of the grass. Algae is less of an issue with an actively growing turfgrass canopy. The first step is to check the irrigation system to make sure it is watering properly (i.e. not too regular or too much). The turfgrass species we grow in Georgia perform better when grown on the slightly dry side, so scaling back the irrigation and adjusting the irrigation schedule will benefit the grass and can discourage the algae.

Improve internal soil and surface drainage. Core aeration opens the soil, allows oxygen into the root system, and reduces compaction. While allowing the soil surface to dry-out then breaking up the Nostic "crust" by scarifying the upper 1/4- to 1/2-inch can break the algae into pieces and encourage its spread, it also permits the turfgrass stolons to root into thin areas and outcompete the Nostic. With proper irrigation and core aerification the grass can cover and eventually predominate the area where the Nostoc was present.

To learn more about the Georgia Urban Council - [CLICK HERE](#).



## GA Department of Agriculture Participates in Peanut Quality Control Effort

*Terry Hollifield, Executive Director*

Hurricane Michael and a wetter than usual 2019 winter contributed to higher than desired aflatoxin levels in peanuts as reported by virtually all peanut shellers. Sheller reports of high levels of aflatoxin were verified by seed laboratory analysis.

Well aware that aflatoxin can result in poorer than expected emergence of peanut seed, and armed with this knowledge, peanut seed producers were very cautious and scrutinized each and every lot of seed offered for sale. Multiple tests were performed on many lots to determine true seed quality. It is apparent that the certified peanut seed producers obtained the desired results as the industry is reporting fewer seed complaints than in previous years.

GCIA and the Georgia Department of Agriculture Seed Laboratory in Tifton, Georgia were also aware of potential issues. The Seed Laboratory staff immediately became proactive and significantly increased sampling of seed offered for sale to determine seed quality and compliance with labeling. Over 300 regulatory samples were taken by state seed inspectors and tested at the Tifton Seed Laboratory. Only 17 of the 300+ samples failed to meet certified seed quality standards.

I believe these findings verify the professionalism and dedication of our certified peanut seed producers and their commitment to providing the very best seed to peanut farmers in the Southeast.



*Special thanks to GDA staff - Dr. John Shugart, Jenny Wren, Dan Duncan, and DeeDee Smith and her team at the Tifton Seed Lab for their cooperation on this project. We greatly appreciate all they do to support the seed industry in Georgia!*



## Skaggs & Carraway go to Australia in support of ITGAP - AusGAP Partnership

In early March, GCIA's Billy Skaggs and Bill Carraway of The Turfgrass Group traveled to Australia in support of a new partnership between GCIA's International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program (ITGAP) and the Australian Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program (AusGAP). Several years in the making, AusGAP is the only exclusive agent of ITGAP in the world. So how did all this start...

Conversations began in 2015 regarding the possibility of bringing U.S. patented turfgrass varieties, including UGA's TifTurf bermudagrass and Blade Runner Farms' Zeon zoysiagrass, to Australia which led to the subject of certification or quality assurance programs. The parties involved included Lawn Solutions Australia, The Turfgrass Group and ITGAP.

In 2015 – 2016, meetings and visits in the U.S. and in Australia took place. In 2017, the first foundation class fields were planted in Australia. Collaboration between the three parties continued. During this process, ITGAP determined the size and scope of new turf variety introductions into Australia would require a different approach. After many months of phone calls, emails and face to face meetings, ITGAP and AusGAP formalized their agreement, and AusGAP became the exclusive agent for ITGAP in Australia and the surrounding region in 2018.

While there, Skaggs and Carraway visited 10 sod farms and provided training to over 100 producers and farm employees with many traveling several hours to attend the on farm training sessions. The quality of the sod, the professionalism of the growers, and their desire to learn was very impressive. It was obvious that the work put in by Nick Dorney, AusGAP Managing Director, was paying dividends in a big way.

In addition to inspections and on farm training, Skaggs had the opportunity to speak with customers who had already planted TifTuf and Sir Grange (Zeon), as well as potential new customers. He and Dorney visited the Sports Turf Research Institute in Brisbane where they made a presentation highlighting the collaboration between ITGAP and AusGAP.

Later in the week, Skaggs & Dorney visited the Campbelltown Sports Stadium where TifTuf was installed in late 2018. While there, they spoke about the collaboration between ITGAP and AusGAP. In addition, Campbelltown staff provided a tour of the facility and participants were able to examine the TifTuf field after several rounds of play over the preceding weekend.

To learn more about the ITGAP / AusGAP Connection, check out Lawn Solutions Australia's April edition of Turf Talk - [CLICK HERE](#).



**AusGAP**  
CERTIFIED

**Exclusive  
agents of**



## REMINDER - Peanut applications are due July 1st

In early June, all GCIA peanut members and buying points should have received an application packet for Certified peanut seed field inspection. July 1st is the deadline to submit the application along with all supporting documents.

Two items worthy of note:

- (1) Be sure to save a copy of the application and supporting materials for your records, and
- (2) GCIA will NOT inspect fields for seed certification unless the applicant has a license for the requested cultivar.

To access the application materials online, click [HERE](#). Please call the office with any questions.

## Small Grain & Forage Certified Seed

Throughout the spring and early summer, GCIA inspectors have been hard at work conducting field inspections on a wide variety of small grain and forage crops. Below is an overview of the crops and varieties. For further information on the varieties available, check out the GCIA Small Grain & Forage Buyers Guide at [www.georgiacrop.com](http://www.georgiacrop.com).

Crop	# of varieties
Bahiagrass	3
Bermudagrass	1
Field Peas	2
Perennial Peanut	1
Oats	5
Rye	1
Triticale	1
Wheat	13

In addition to the crops inspected for certified seed production, GCIA also offers the Noxious Weed Free Forage & Straw program. This effort assures buyers that forage and straw sold with the Noxious Weed Free designation meets minimum standards designed to limit the spread of noxious weeds. Many landscape and roadway contracts call for the use of noxious weed free straw and mulch.

Seventeen GCIA members produced these crops totaling over 5,000 acres, including the Quality Assurance and Noxious Weed Free programs. For more information, contact the GCIA office.

## 2019 Peanut Industry Pre-Harvest Meeting

The 2019 Industry Pre-Harvest Meeting, a jointly hosted event by the American Peanut Shellers Association and the National Peanut Buying Points Association, is scheduled for August 6-7, 2019. The PAC Auction & Dinner is scheduled for August 6, 2019 at Merry Acres Event Center in Albany, Georgia, with the Pre-Harvest General Session to follow on August 7, 2019 at The Bindery in Leesburg, Georgia. For more information, click [HERE](#).



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PEANUT SHELLERS ASSOCIATION  
SINCE 1919





# Georgia Crop

## Improvement Association

2425 South Milledge Avenue  
Athens, Georgia 30605

Phone: 706-542-2351  
[www.georgiacrop.com](http://www.georgiacrop.com)

### OFFICERS

Ken Morrow, The Turfgrass Group, Inc.  
President

Ricky Hartley, Golden Peanut & Tree Nuts  
Past President

Blake Shepard, Plantation Seed Conditioners, Inc.  
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### DIRECTORS

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Larry Cunningham, R.L. Cunningham & Sons, Inc.

Jutt Howard, North Georgia Turf

Reed Rogers, Golden Peanut & Tree Nuts

Chris Roquemore, Super Sod / Patten Seed

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### STAFF

Terry Hollifield, Executive Director

Joy Cooper, Seed Certification Administrative Assistant

Terry Crane, Food Safety Program Manager

Chase Crawford, Field & Conditioning Plant Inspector

Sean Cunard, Field & Conditioning Plant Inspector

Billie Dunn, Outside Services Program Assistant

Jeanne Gonzales, Organic Program Assistant

Becki Hicks, Turfgrass Administrative Assistant

Thomas Kessler, Field & Conditioning Plant Inspector

Johnny Luke, Organic Certification Program Manager

Marie Sidwell, Director of Operations

Billy Skaggs, Certification Program Manager