



## CRABGRASS (*Digitaria spp.*)

By STEVE BATTEN

Is crabgrass a winter weed? Yes, germination begins in mid-January for several crabgrass species. In South tropical Florida, there is a species flowering every month of the year.

Crabgrass is found world wide, and even grown as a turfgrass in Singapore. In Australia the common name is Blue-Couch. In Florida, there are more than 21 species identified as escaped introductions now growing as natives, and many more experimentals in state herbariums. One cultivar, *Servenola*, has recently been released as a forage grass by IFAS. The most common species are Tropical Crabgrass (*D. bicornis*) and Southern Crabgrass (*D. ciliaris*). *Digitaria sanguinalis*, known as Large or Hairy crabgrass is not found in Florida as a common species.

Many species of crabgrass in Florida produce stolons, which make low mowing as a control ineffective. Two of these species are Blanketgrass (*D. seratina*) and India Crabgrass (*D. longifolia*).

Because there are so many species in Florida, winter application of a pre-emergence herbicide in early January may, or may not work for control. Germination time, temperatures, and seed coat chemical reduction (scarification) varies greatly for each species. ■

(illustration from *Turf Management for Golf Courses, Fall 1982*, by James Beard, published by Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, Minn., illustrated by Steve Batten)