



# NEWS LETTER

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*IS IT A RACKET?*

*INVESTIGATIONS REGARDING WEBWORMS*

*OFFICERS OF THE GREENKEEPERS CLUB*

*MAY MEETING*

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**MAY**

**1933**

This NEWSLETTER is published monthly by the Greenkeepers Club of New England, and sent free to its members and their Greens' Chairmen. Subscription price ten cents a copy, or a dollar a year.

GUY C. WEST ..... Editor

312 Mt. Pleasant St., Fall River, Mass.

HOWARD D. FARRANT Business Mgr.

132 Russert Rd., West Roxbury, Mass.

May, 1933

Vol. 5, No. 5

## IS IT A RACKET?

By E. E. Pattison

President, International Seed Service, Inc., New York

(Reprinted by special permission from the March 17th Seed World)

The title question and its twin brother, "What, then, is a racket?" are being continually asked these days by parties in all industries, who are analyzing their particular industry in the light of both old and new ethics. The answer to the first question will be left to the readers—some of whom will answer "Yes" and some "No."

### What Is a Racket?

The second question calls for a definition and I give you not only my own, but that which was agreed upon by a group of individuals, all of whom were or had been in and out of the seed business and who had argued pro and con over their coffee cups. "A racket is a scheme involving deception whereby one makes an illegitimate profit." Personally I prefer this definition to stop with the word "deception," in fact I would make the definition read "racket is deception" and what is more to the point "deception is racket."

It was some twenty-five years ago when I started looking at the seed industry. My place then was a laboratory table in the United States Department of Agriculture, sometimes in Washington and at other times at various field stations. This was before the enactment of Federal legislation covering import and interstate commerce, before the era of state seed laws, before the time of Federal adulterated seed investigation and, I must add, before we had seed education as we now know it. Today we have all these. Tomorrow we

will have more. Why? Because of the many rackets I saw then and the many rackets which I continue to see today from the same kind of a laboratory table, differently located, with different eyes and mind—eyes and mind trained and developed abroad as well as at home in official, scientific and commercial roles to detect commercial tricks, unethical practices and errors of both commission and omission.

Before going further, for the benefit of that large group of ethical merchants, let me say that during the last twenty-five years these merchants have honestly fought for the elimination of "racketeering," but in spite of their efforts and all the laws, regulations and knowledge, "racketeering" continues and it is one of the main reasons why the seed industry has not been as profitable as other industries in the agricultural group.

In this article it will not be possible to discuss rackets of each branch of the industry so the discussion will be limited to one or two rackets in the field and grass seed branch.

### The Lawn Grass Racket

The big racket in this branch is the lawn grass racket. Of this racket there are several sub-rackets, about which I will speak later.

Every year we make hundreds of tests on all sorts of grass seed mixtures, some sent to us from our clients, some we gather for our own information. Therefore, we have a file on most brands and mixtures sold in the east. Some are good but these are so in the minority that they are pathetic. The great majority show no regularity of formula or quality. True it is that most brands year after year contain the same ingredients (after all the number of ingredients is very limited) but not in constant per cent or quality. For example, in the years when Kentucky bluegrass is cheap, the percentages will run 25 per cent to 35 per cent and the quality 19 to 24 pounds to the bushel. In the year when it is high, the percent shrinks to a bare 5 per cent (this is the minimum amount under most laws) and the quality drops to 14 to 17 pounds to the bushel. I hope to see the day when all American dealers will follow in the footsteps of their English cousins. The constancy of their scientific formulae and their excellent quality year after year has always been a pure delight to those who carefully watch.

But the principal trouble with lawn grass is not the irregularity of formulae and quality; it is that fully 50 per cent of everything sold under the name of lawn grass isn't lawn grass at all. To demonstrate this and other points, there will be given a case sent in to us by one of our clients since this article was started.

The case starts with the following advertisement. It read as follows:

Why Pay Two Profits on  
GRASS SEED

When You Can Buy Direct  
from the Producer?

Special for 1933

LAWN SEED MIXTURE

Per 100-lb. bag, delivered .....\$5.75

Packed in 5-lb. printed bags,  
per 100 lbs. delivered ..... 6.75

Packed in 2-lb. printed bags,  
per 100 lbs. delivered ..... 7.25

Packed in 1-lb. printed bags,  
per 100 lbs. delivered ..... 7.75

This is a well balanced mixture containing: Redtop, Ryegrass, Timothy, Kentucky Bluegrass, and White Clover.

Let's analyze this advertisement.

1. The company putting out this circular is not the "Producer" of the seed he mixes and sells. At most he is merely a reconditioner or manufacturer.

2. The mixture is not a "Lawn Seed Mixture." The best that can be said of it is that it is a pasture mixture.

3. It is not a "Well Balanced Mixture" if the formula as given by the salesman selling the merchandise is correct (and we can assume it to be because of the quotation). Here is the formula:

35 per cent Ryegrass  
35 per cent Timothy  
21 per cent Redtop  
1 per cent Kentucky bluegrass  
1 per cent White Clover  
7 per cent Redtop Chaff

100 per cent

4. It does not contain Kentucky bluegrass and white clover within the meaning of the law or according to the interpretation of any official association. (For an ingredient to be included in the pure seed of a mixture its presence must be at least 5 per cent. The presence of 1 per cent of any commercial seed is considered but a "trace.")

The client asks us "What to do about it?" We can and have answered the question for his particular territory, but the question is bigger than just his territory. It is national, so I, in turn, in these pages, ask the seed industry the same question. I am not at all sanguine about anything being done.

### Sub-Rackets

Now for a few sub-rackets. Here they are in digest form.

1. The selling or offering for sale sifted domestic ryegrass (which is a mixture of at least two species) under the name of "American Short Seeded Pacey's."

2. Mixing of bent with redtop and selling the mixture for bent.

3. Mixing Chewings and European fescue (European being a mixture of mostly undesirable turf fescues, hard and sheeps) and selling the mixture for Chewings.

4. Mixing of American bent with imported German bentgrass chaff (chaff takes a low ad valorem duty, not 40 cents per pound as in the case of bent seed) and selling the mixture for South German mixed bent.

Such deceptions are often not discovered by even the best official analysts and when discovered the burden of proof is too difficult to permit publication or prosecution.

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So again we come back to the old question, "What to do about it?" This time by the "it" in this question I do not mean only the rackets, this "it" means the seed industry, which is suffering from serious ailments other than rackets. And I for one hold that the industry will never be well and sturdy until it does something of major dimensions for itself. During these twenty-five years I have seen it dose itself and be dosed for this and that, but most of the dosing only apparently cured the minor maladies.

### Create an Institute

Why can't the industry create and maintain an institute? This has been a pet idea of mine for some seventeen years. As I write I think of the time when the dream of such an institute almost became a reality. It was in 1916-1918 when the Wholesale Grass Seed Association consisted of some forty-nine members, each member apparently showing substantial financial gains. The plan which was in the president's (maybe he was an ex-president then) mind was for each company to contribute not less than one thousand and not more than two thousand dollars for the creation of an institute. None of them would have missed this amount then and the good that would have been done in these years couldn't be estimated in dollars.



To my way of thinking the best thing that could happen would be the creation of some directorship or dictatorship by a small institute in back of him, and power, real—not pseudo, in his hands. What the czars of other industries have done can be done for the seed industry—intelligently and economically. And so, exit, rackets!

### INVESTIGATIONS REGARDING THE BLUEGRASS WEBWORMS IN TURF

by H. F. A. North and  
G. A. Thompson, Jr.  
(R. I. Exp. Sta.)

Rather severe damage to golf turf during late years has been caused by Webworms (*Crambus* species). This damage may give a putting green the appearance of a moth eaten rug and reduce the putting properties proportionately.

Although webworms or Close Winged Moths have been described by entomologists for over 100 years but little definite knowledge of the best means for control in fine turf seems to have been published until recently. For this reason a test was begun this year at the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station with certain promising materials in order that the infestation in demonstration plats might be held in check. The test has been successful in showing differences in the control properties of the eight insecticides which were tried.

#### Webworm Damage to Velvet Bent Varieties in 1930 to 1932

In 1930 the demonstration putting green plats of velvet bent grass at the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station showed a rather general moth eaten appearance during July and again in September. It was found to be due to the Blue Grass Webworm. An arsenate of lead dust was tried without success.

Damage to the same plats in 1931 was most severe in July and September. Various insecticides were applied such as poison bait, a pyrethrum extract and a spray of arsenate of lead. The pyrethrum extract applied with a sprinkling can brought up a moderate number of webworm larvae to the surface. Many of those brought up died but the material was not as effective as could be desired.

Although the materials had been largely ineffective during 1930 and 1931, it became increasingly evident that the velvet bents were the only bent grasses noticeably damaged and that some varieties were more heavily damaged than others. Table I indicates the per cent of area damaged among pure and mixed velvet bent varieties during 1931 and 1932.

It may be seen from Table I that varieties such as Kernwood and Highland planted in 1928, Acme of 1929, and Yorkshire of 1930 were more heavily damaged both during the seasons of 1931 and 1932, than other varieties planted the same year. The varieties B. P. I. 14276 and Mountain Ridge were similarly less heavily damaged during both seasons. These are relatively pure velvet bents. When the varieties which are somewhat mixed with colonial bent such as Newport and German Bent of 1928, Oregon grown seed of 1930, or Prince Edward Island of 1931 are compared with pure velvet bent they are found to have been less damaged in both seasons than the relatively pure turf. The same point is brought out by a comparison of Newport (seed) of 1928 and Newport (stolons) of 1930. It will be noticed that the varieties planted in 1931 were as a rule less damaged during 1932 than those planted during the years previously. The average damage for 1932 on all varieties was as follows: July—4.8; Aug.—4.1; Sept.—9.4; and, Oct.—2.7. This indicates rather clearly that the infestation of webworms was the greatest in July and September and that the September attack was the most damaging. Two of the varieties which were seriously damaged in 1931 were selected for use in the test of the insecticides mentioned previously. These were the velvet bents Yorkshire of 1930 and Kernwood of 1928.

The Yorkshire variety originated in the county of the same name in England. It is an extremely fine, vivid light green and upright variety but seems poorly adapted to warm weather. The Brown Patch preventative treatment used during the past two years has benefited the Yorkshire much more than the Kernwood variety. Kernwood Velvet Bent originated from a plant found growing on the Kernwood Country Club, Salem, Massachusetts. It has a bright, medium green color, upright habit and above average fineness of leaf. The Kernwood variety is well adapted to

(Continued on Page 6)



## MAY MEETING

The May meeting was held at the Kernwood Country Club, Salem, Mass., on Monday, May 8th. Wendell Miller, noted irrigation and water system expert, gave an interesting demonstration of sprinklers, etc. with various pressures. On one pipe line at Kernwood, the static pressure at a high green was 63 lb., with a sprinkler running, the pressure was 58 lb., 54 lb. at the end of 100 feet of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " hose. A lower green on the same line gave a static pressure of 80 lb. Mr. Miller computed from this that this green was about 39 feet lower than the high green, multiplying the difference in pressure by 2.31. The residual pressure at this hydrant was 73 lb., and at the end of 100 feet of hose was practically the same, as the sprinkler being used was well adapted to the pressure and size of pipe. With a sprinkler also going on the high green, the pressure dropped to 68 lb., and with a third sprinkler also running on the same line, the pressure dropped to 57 lb. Using a larger sprinkler on the same

hose dropped the pressure at hydrant to 35 lb. and at end of hose to 22 lb. With inch hose the pressures were 28 lb. at both locations. The pressure was raised to 42 lb. by reducing the size of the nozzle of sprinkler 1/16 inch. With one sprinkler shut off on the line, the pressure went up to 51 lb.

During lunch Mr. Miller spoke briefly concerning his demonstrations of the morning, and also pointed out that we all must be prepared to accept fairway irrigation, as it is coming soon to many clubs.

At a short business meeting Charles and Samuel Vickery of the Cohasset Country Club were elected to membership.

An eighteen hole medal handicap tournament was played in the afternoon, with the following results:

- 1st Gross, R. W. Peckham, 87.
- 1st Net, Frank Wilson, 96-27-69.
- 2nd net, Ernest Stephenson, 89-18-71.
- 3rd net, Guy West, 91-18-73.
- 4th net, John Latvis, 99-24-75.
- Highest Gross, Joseph Johnson, 130.

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**TABLE I.**  
 Estimate of damage for Blue Grass Webworm among pure and mixed velvet bent varieties in 1931 and 1932.

Varieties of velvet bent in putting green turf	Method and year of planting	% pure v. b. 1932	Damage 1931 season	Ave. % of area damaged 1932
Kernwood*	1928 stolons	99.5	Heavy	10.5
Highland	" " "	99.5	"	5.5
Newport	seed	60.0	Medium	2.0
German bent	" " "	15.0	Light	0.4
Acme	1929 stolons	95.0	Heavy	5.2
B. P. I. 14276†	" " "	99.5	Medium	4.0
Mountain Ridge	" " "	99.5	"	3.6
Yorkshire*	1930 " " "	99.5	Heavy	22.7
Newport	" " "	98.0	"	7.5
Oregon grown	seed	5.0	None	0.6
Cunningham	1931 stolons	98.0	"	7.5
Nichols Ave. No. 2	" " "	98.0	"	4.1
Highland	seed	93.5	"	3.9
"	stolons	93.5	"	3.7
Kernwood	seed	93.5	"	3.2
B. P. I. 14276	" " "	93.5	"	3.0
Nichols Ave. No. 1	stolons	93.0	"	2.9
Wykagyl	" " "	93.0	"	2.9
Prince Edward Island	seed	20.0	"	0.6
Valentine No. 2	stolons	93.0	"	0.5
Elizabeth	" " "	90.0	"	0.4
B. P. I. 14276	" " "	97.0	"	0.2
Yorkshire	seed	99.5	"	2.4

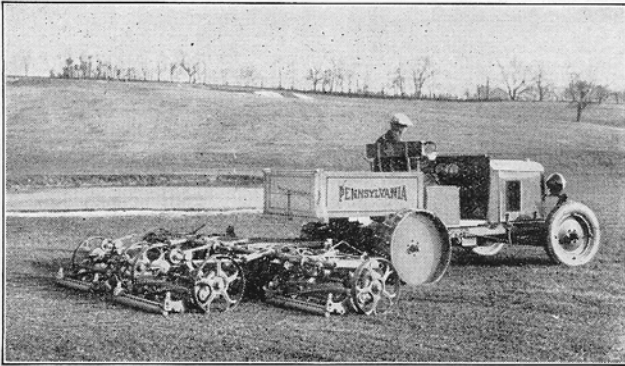
\*—Used for the main test—1932.

†—Used for the later test—1932.

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the climate of this region and for that reason is probably the better grass for a test of insecticides. Both varieties have been mildly attacked by Large and Small Brown Patch.

#### Method of Test

The plats of Yorkshire and Kernwood velvet bents were each divided into 16 small subplats. Each of the treatments was applied on August 6th and October 10th to two subplats on each variety. Two subplats on each variety were left untreated as check plats. One of the materials, Paris green, was found to "burn" the Yorkshire turf severely and a spray of arsenate of lead at 4 pounds per 1000 square feet was substituted at the second application.

The methods of application, rate of application, type or material, and cost of treating 1000 square feet of turf are as follows:

- 1) Arsenate of lead at two rates.  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound and 2 pounds in 20 gallons of water sprayed well into the grass with pressure. The treatment costs approximately 7 and 30 cents respectively for the arsenate of lead.
- 2) Paris green— $\frac{1}{2}$  pound applied as No. 1 treatment. Cost is approximately 30 cents.
- 3) Trade material A—this is a trade marked powder both for brown patch and soil insects. It was sprayed on at  $\frac{1}{3}$  pound and was estimated to cost 67 cents per treatment.
- 4) Extracts of pyrethrum No. 1 and No. 2—two trade products often available locally. Dissolved soap was used with Pyrethrum No. 2. Both were applied with a sprinkling can diluted at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pints in 111 gallons of water. Approximate cost is \$4.00 per treatment.
- 5) Kerosene emulsion—the stock solution consisted of 1 pound of laundry soap, 1 gallon of boiling water and  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon of kerosene. The kerosene was gradually beaten into the hot soap solution. This stock solution was diluted at the rate of  $2\frac{1}{5}$  gallons per 111 gallons of water and applied with a sprinkling can. The cost is approximately 20 cents per treatment.

#### Results

The webworm damage was estimated as the percent of area browned or vacant of grass approximately one month after each treatment. The dam-

age was not uniform among the subplats at the beginning of the test on August 6th. For that reason the average of the estimates of August 30 and October 28 was divided by the estimate at the beginning of the test. This data will be found under the heading "August 30

TABLE II.

The results obtained with various treatments for the control of webworms in velvet bent putting green turf. The average of the estimates on August 30 and October 28 were divided by the estimates previous to treatment to obtain the percentage damage given below.

Treatment per 1000 square feet	Yorkshire (1930) Aug. 30 & Oct. 28 after treatment		Kernwood (1928) Aug. 30 & Oct. 28 after treatment		Kernwood and Yorkshire after treatment
	T	Ave.	Unt.	Ave.	
Arsenate of lead 2 pounds	30	42	5	5	24
Paris green	26	53	12	17	35
Material A	33	44	10	30	37
Pyrethrum No. 1	24	52	15	33	43
Pyrethrum No. 2	50	72	13	42	57
Arsenate of lead $\frac{1}{2}$ pound	67	79	12	69	74
No treatment	75	82	135	89	86
Kerosene emulsion	52	79	152	126	103
Average	48		58		

T—Brown patch treatment given.  
Unt.—No brown patch treatment given.

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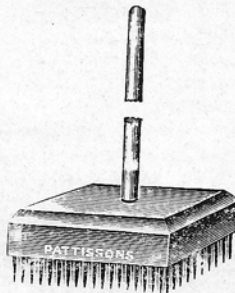
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and October 28 after treatment" in table II and is shown for brown patch treated and untreated subplots as well as the average of both. The average damage on both varieties of grass is given in the column headed "Yorkshire and Kernwood after treatment".

Considering the data in table II for the Yorkshire variety it may be seen from the average at the bottom of the table that approximately twice the webworm damage occurred on the subplots which were not treated for brown patch. The 1/3 bichloride, 2/3 calomel treatment was used as recommended by the U. S. Golf Association. The damage after treatment was least on the subplots treated with arsenate of lead 2 pounds or material A and greatest where no treatment was given. Paris green and pyrethrum No. 1 were about equal in preventing damage and pyrethrum No. 1 was somewhat more effective than pyrethrum No. 2. Arsenate of lead 1/2 pound and kerosene emulsion were both ineffective. It is also evident that the better treatments on the Yorkshire are also the better treatments on the kernwood variety.

A most satisfactory indication that the data is consistent is the similarity between the effectiveness of the materials on the Kernwood variety and the average of both varieties. Arsenate of lead 2 pounds has given considerably the best control on the Kernwood and was the best in the average of both varieties. Material A and pyrethrum No. 1 were found to be about equally effective on the Kernwood and on both varieties. Similarly pyrethrum No. 2 gave somewhat less control than pyrethrum No. 1. Only a very slight effect on the webworms resulted from the use of arsenate of lead 1/2 pound and Kerosene emulsion was least effective of all treatments.

*(Concluded in Next Issue)*

The attempt which is to be made this year by the Entertainment Committee to supply some education feature at each meeting during the Summer is worthy of your support. Educational features have been a part of many of the past Summer meetings, and often have been only sparsely attended, while most of the early arrivals played golf. We believe that the rule should be made that no one should be allowed to play even a few holes until the tournament. This might assure the educational feature a better attendance.

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES OF THE GREENKEEPERS CLUB

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- Educational and Interrelation Committee, Rhode Island Section—Ray T. Granger, Chairman, Newport C. C., Newport, R. I., James Lawson, R. Wallace Peckham.

Arthur W. MacLean, formerly assistant at Kernwood, has recently been appointed greenkeeper at the Brattleboro Country Club, Brattleboro, Vt.



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