

UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION

GREEN SECTION

WESTERN OFFICE



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• Western Turfletter •

Vol. 10 - No. 5

September - October 1961

P U R P L E B E N T G R A S S

A n d

T U R F C O N F E R E N C E T I M E

Fall in the West has many signs. Aspens take on their golden hue and patch the mountain sides; the "dog days" of the summer are thankfully over and hunters head for the field and hope for an early frost, light snow or rain. The golf course superintendent discovers patches of purple bentgrass in his putting greens and knows that with Fall -- it's Turf Conference time and another chance to "refill the cup" that has been drained all summer long.

Top Dressing - New Popularity for a Sound, Old Practice!

Like so many things that lose favor, almost drop from view and are then brought back to prominence, the practice of top-dressing greens is slowly but surely regaining popularity. Perhaps such a cycle is the final test for any worthwhile practice. In any event, more and more turf specialists are encouraging a return to the annual or bi-annual top-dressing of greens. In the very near future, we hope to discuss this in greater detail in a Western Turfletter.

Mr. Bob Wiley, Agronomist for the Aero-Thatch Corporation emphasized the importance of top-dressing greens at the recent conferences. "Top-dressing is needed today to provide the golfer with the type of putting surface he demands. It plays a vital role in putting green management and thatch control. And one should never forget that thatch, like fire, is a good friend when controlled but a disastrous enemy when uncontrolled."

Plastic Greenhouses for Winter Greens?

What may sound impractical and of no significance today may become practical and commonplace tomorrow. Agricultural history is full of such instances. ----- Winter damage to greens in mountainous and northern areas of the west as well as throughout the country is becoming of increasing importance. Golfers are looking for championship turf earlier each spring.

Mr. Jim Latham, Agronomist, Milwaukee Sewerage Commission believes that "plastic coverings for winter protection of greens are practical and will come into wider use in the years ahead. Like anything else however, it must be done properly. Fungicide protection under the plastic is essential for disease control. Proper removal time of the tarpaulin in the spring (around March 1st under Milwaukee conditions) is also important. If left on too long, the plastic covering may cause some loss if the weather turns hot or may cause excessive growth if the weather is only warm. But when properly done, they can be of immense value to the superintendent and a great joy to the springtime golfer."

The Challenge of 'Professionalism'

"Golf course maintenance today is big business and any successful business enterprise must be concerned with three areas of activity: PRODUCTION: ADMINISTRATION AND MARKETING." So spoke Dr. Gene Nutter, Executive Director of the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America.

"In our profession, the Production Phase includes, 1) Turfgrass technology; 2) Knowledge of golf course operations and 3) Labor management. In the Administrative Phase we must include, 1) Work planning and 2) Business management. In the Marketing Phase we are concerned with public relations and self improvement.

"Which one of these activities is the weakest link in our professional chain? A recent survey shows it is Business Management and Public Relations. It is here we must concentrate our efforts. To move ahead professionally, today's golf course superintendent needs a program of self improvement. We must become better readers; work harder at our jobs and avoid getting into a rut; perhaps enroll in night courses in business management or similar formal training; develop public speaking abilities even if it means enrolling in courses or joining clubs for this purpose. Self help and improvement is the first step toward development of a professional image ----- which is so important."

More On Green Construction

Dr. Roy Goss, Turf Specialist of Washington State University pin pointed one of the tragedies of so many putting greens today -- "tile lines that do not function. Too often we find tile lines 'running dry' because they are too deep, improperly installed or for a number of other reasons. Good internal drainage is essential for quality turf ----- anywhere."

In the same vein, Dr. Walter Gardner, Agronomy Department, Washington State University is also concerned with water movement in soils. Dr. Gardner has accomplished some of the most outstanding time lapse photography in the world to show the phenomenon of saturated and unsaturated flow of water within soils.

"The saturated rate of flow is water movement due to external forces and is concerned with the large pore spaces of the soil. Unsaturated flow (when there is both air and water in the soil) is concerned with water movement due to internal forces (capillary) along the surfaces of small pore spaces." ----- Never miss an opportunity to see Dr. Gardner's films.

"We are finding what appears to be Ophiobolus (sounds like Minneapolis) Patch in the northwest each year", reports Dr. Chas. Gould, Washington State University. Ophiobolus is sometimes difficult to positively identify but was reported by Dr. Monteith of the USGA Green Section (in 1932) as one of several miscellaneous parasitic diseases of golfing turf. It is a footrot causing organism common to grains and grasses. In turf, it causes variable size patches (6-inches and larger) of completely dead plants. "A drench of 20 to 30 gallons of water with a normal dosage of a mercury fungicide will suppress the disease, but it offers only temporary control", reports Dr. Gould.

Presented also was evidence that an accumulative effect may be occurring with mercury fungicides in a prolonged control program for Fusarium Patch (Snow Mold). For example, mercury fungicides that have been applied at least once monthly to predominately Poa annua turf for the past three years appears to cause some turf thinning. It should be emphasized that this may occur only after prolonged and reasonably concentrated use of such materials on Poa annua turf. ----- The best control for Fusarium Patch seems to be alternate applications of mercury and cadmium fungicides. The cadmium materials do not appear to have a thinning effect.

Football and The Golf Course Superintendent

Dr. Norman Goetze, Extension Agronomist for Oregon State University finds that golf course superintendents may have their problems with fairway turf, but nothing like the problems encountered on most athletic fields.

Dr. Goetze suggests that a "golf course superintendent could make a real contribution to his community by looking into the school athletic field problem. In most cases it is difficult to determine exactly who is in charge of athletic fields. There is rarely an overall plan for mowing schedules, watering practices, fertilization or seeding. ---- No one cares about the football field until a week or two before the first game. This isn't good turf management and is the reason why so many poor fields exist."

AGRICULTURE YEARBOOK "SEEDS" NOW READY

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, has announced the publication of "Seeds" the 1961 Yearbook of Agriculture. The yearbook gives practical information for farmers, gardeners, seedsmen, students and others on the seeds of hybrid corn, sorghum, rice, wheat, grasses, sugar-beets, other field crops, vegetables, flowers and trees.

In the yearbook's seven sections and 75 chapters, with 48 pages of photographs and many drawings, 128 experts explain in laymen's language the importance, life processes, production, processing, certification, testing and marketing of seeds.

Copies of the 1961 "Yearbook on Seeds," at \$2 a copy, may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. Your Congressman may not have exhausted his supply of copies for free distribution.

"Queer thing, but we always think every other man's job is easier than our own. And the better he does it, the easier it looks."

Eden Phillpotts

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