

UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION GREEN SECTION EASTERN REGION

NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT
PLANT INDUSTRY STATION
BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND



EASTERN TURFLETTER

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"The Secret to Success is Constancy to Purpose" -- Disraeli

Constancy to purpose is certainly the Golf Course Superintendent's lot. He aims at perfect turf for golfing pleasure, but perfection is indeed an evasive permanent target. There are many, many important factors which enter into the field of turf management and each is interrelated and interdependent upon the other. Some of these factors are Soils, Climate, Grass Selection, Water Management, Nutrient Requirements, Disease and Weed Prevention and Control, Insect Control, and the factor of Timing, to mention some of the more important ones.

It has been said before that soils are a dynamic system -- soils are alive with pore space, air and water movement, bacteria, fungi, other organisms, growing roots, gaseous exchange, etc. Soil, in other words, is a living and breathing system. Superimposed, we have the living plant, the changing climate, and the human element. In effect then, we have several dynamic systems involved, and the Superintendent's task therefore is to mold these changing systems into a picture of static perfection.

This is no small task, and as such it takes many minds working together to strive toward this goal. Minds of workers in research, education, teaching, extension, industry, and other agencies contribute to progress in this field.

The Green Section, too, has been dedicated to Constancy to Purpose in the Golf Turf Field since 1921. From the days of Harban, Piper, and Oakley through the historic Arlington Turf Gardens to the present day, the Green Section has always aimed at the target of turf improvement, turf perfection. One of the greatest aids to countless golf course Superintendents has been the publications of the Green Section which reported turf research and extension activities of its own, of agencies engaged in turf work, and the work of golf course superintendents throughout the nation. These included "The Bulletin of the Green Section of the U.S.G.A.", "Turf Culture", "Timely Turf Topics", through the present day publications of the Turf Management section of the United States Golf Association Journal and Regional Turfletters.

Now the Green Section employs eight Agronomists (4 in the Eastern Region), who devote full time to the Regional Turf Service Program. Their job is to help you with your turf problems. A personal visit to your golf course is another very important part of this service, wherein the Green Section representative discusses the program in detail with the Superintendent and his Committee on the spot. This affords the opportunity for those present to "pick the brain", so to speak, of the visiting Agronomist. The visit is recorded in the form of a written report to the Superintendent and his Chairman.

We stand ready to assist in every way possible in mutual aim for perfection, and would be pleased to help you with your problems as the season progresses.

From CROPS AND SOILS, June-July, '57

"New Alcohol Saves Water"

"An Australian discovery may prove valuable in cutting down evaporation loss from dams or reservoirs in hot, dry climates.

Cetyl alcohol, a chemical extracted from whale oil, is used to lay a film over the water surface. It restricts the water escaping to the air but does not stop oxygen from entering the water and keeping it fresh. Cetyl alcohol is invisible, tasteless, and harmless to animal life.

Trials over the past two years in dams and reservoirs have shown the chemical cuts evaporation loss by 20 to 70 percent. Much of Australia's dry rangeland belt has a normal water evaporation rate of 8 feet a year."

From CROPS AND SOILS, February, '58

"Many Insects Survive Severe Cold Spells"

"It is a common but false belief that extremely cold winter weather kills off large numbers of insects, says Paul J. Chapman, entomologist at the New York Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva, N. Y. Chapman made a special study of this point last winter, following unusually cold weather -- 25 below and colder -- in January and February of 1957....

Chapman found that insects which overwintered in plant debris or in contact with the soil seemed to have no difficulty in surviving the low temperatures."

Recommended Reading -- "How About Golf Cars?" by George Nivel in the March, 1958 Issue of Golfdom. Reprints of this article complete with survey charts can be obtained (price, 10¢) from Golfdom, 407 South Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Illinois.

SPRING NOTES

Many sections of the Middle-Atlantic and Northeastern United States have had heavy snow and rainfall during the past winter and above normal precipitation has continued so far into the Spring months, consequently many golf courses in these areas have supersaturated soils in some of their greens and fairways.

Each course has its own specific problems and the solutions of these problems rests mainly on the shoulders of the superintendent. It is our intent here to point out some of our observations over a period of years which may be of some help in the solution of these problems.

(1) Excessive winter or spring rainfall may restrict root growth, resulting in shallow roots of turf grasses. Compaction may result, also poorly drained areas suffer most.

(2) Poa annua is often more favorably influenced than the bents and other permanent grasses, and an increase in Poa annua population usually results.

(3) If root systems are shallow and turf is weakened, disease incidence (particularly dollarspot) could be accelerated.

(4) Fertilizer and fungicide programs should be carefully reviewed with emphasis on timing of applications.

Some suggested procedures to minimize damage:

(1) Encourage root depth through cultivation and thatch removal to keep the surface open for better water penetration.

(2) Fertilize adequately but not excessively in the spring.

(3) Step up fungicide applications to a preventive program during the dollarspot season. Infrequent light applications may prove costly in the long run.

(4) Keep your mowers sharp and in top cutting condition, especially during the Poa annua season. Spring is a trying time for equipment. Mower blades are nicked by foreign obstacles hidden in the soft turf or missed during spring cleanup. Because of the nature of Poa annua seedheads, they are difficult to mow cleanly, and sharp mowers are essential to a clean, smooth playing surface.

(5) If winter and spring play was heavy, more frequent top dressing may be necessary to true-up the putting surfaces on some greens.

(6) Working parts of tractor motors and other small equipment will overheat when covered with seedheads and clippings.

(7) Mark areas that retain water for excessive periods and improve drainage when time permits.

Eastern Turfletter

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