

# UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION GREEN SECTION EASTERN REGION

## NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

## MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT

711 WEST AVENUE  
JENKINTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA



## EASTERN TURFLETTER

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NORTHEASTERN AGRONOMIST

No. 3

June 1960

### HARMAN JOINS GREEN SECTION STAFF

Raymond E. Harman, known to his many friends as "Dutch", recently was appointed to the Green Section Staff. "Dutch" is well known to Superintendents of the New Jersey-Metropolitan Area as a result of his interest in golf turf while County Agent, and his work with Superintendents of courses in Essex County, New Jersey. "Dutch" is also an excellent plant materials and ornamental plantings man. Harman will work out of the Northeastern District Office.

### THE FRIT FLY -- ON THE INCREASE

An article published in the July '58 issue of the USGA Journal and Turf Management described a gnat-like insect which had been observed in large numbers on fine turf areas. It was first observed on well fertilized Merion bluegrass turf -- then on putting green, tee, and fairway turf. It was identified as the FRIT FLY (Oscinella frit). It is also called the Grain Fly.

This insect appears to have grown in numbers here in the Northeast. The extent of its presence on your course could easily be established by dropping a golf ball on different turf areas---these flies appear to be attracted to the color white---and several will light on the ball within seconds. Perhaps some of the players at your course have wondered about it - as they do not move away quickly. They seem totally unaware of imminent danger and do not scramble as the player addresses the ball.

There have been reports too that these insects are attracted to persons with white hair. Superintendent Bill Riley of Essex Fells C. C. and Superintendent "Red" Wender of Plainfield C. C. noted this recently. Bill's white hair attracted numerous flies, Red's did not.

This gnat-like insect is about as long as the dimple on a golf ball, and about 1/3 as wide. It has a rasping mouth-part according to Dr. John C. Schread, Entomologist, Connecticut

Agricultural Experiment Station. It gets down into the crown and injures the plant. From observation symptoms appear to be:

- (1) The turf appears to be suffering from drought... we have seen it look "dry" after a good rainfall.
- (2) The turf looks chlorotic--yellowish and weak.
- (3) The turf appears to be suffering from disease somewhat like an attack of Helminthosporium.

Here we have an insect pest that appears not only to attack the turf, but also creates a psychological hazard to the player by its persistence in resting on the golf ball - also in that it gets into the white hair of players - and in one way or another into the hair of the Superintendent.

It appears also that this insect primarily goes after well fertilized turf...we have seldom seen any great number in rough areas. The best control to date has been DDT at the rate of 2 lbs. actual to the acre. As more than one brood may develop over the season, more than one control treatment may be necessary. The first large infestation was noted this season in early June, and this brood is at the height of activity in the lower portion of the Northeastern District (New Jersey-Long Island-lower New York) at this writing June 13th.

Dr. Schread is conducting further control tests and promises to report results as soon as they are available.

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While on the subject, another surface feeding insect is back again in good numbers...and we fear that we may be belaboring the issue somewhat, but we have a strong suspicion that injury caused by surface feeding insects has perhaps been creating more problems than we may be giving credit for... when our major problem was Japanese Beetle and other white grubs we were very much concerned about the great loss of turf... and the newer insecticides quickly corrected this problem... and gave us the extra dividend of protection for six years or more against the grub. This however does not protect turf from surface feeding insects for this same period.

If there is some question about the presence of surface feeders, and well there may be for they are usually quite difficult to find - we suggest that a test be made on an acre or two using 1/3 the rate of any of the faster acting insecticides normally recommended for grub control. Apply the insecticides in afternoon and do not water it in - as you need to for grubs. This rate, of course, would also take care of the Frit Fly.

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It is the practice of many golf courses to employ college students and high school students during the summer months to the advantage of both the students and their employers.

Undoubtedly, much of this part time help is inexperienced and, therefore, to some extent, "accident prone".

We think it appropriate and timely to call attention to a recent article in the "Reader's Digest" which states: "Five years ago a study by the American Mutual Liability Insurance Company disclosed that power mowers were involved in 35,000 accidents a year. When the company repeated the study last summer and fall, it was found that the casualty toll had doubled. Lost in the carnage were 50,000 toes and 18,000 fingers. The rotary types were the chief offenders. Yet the study clearly indicated that only some nine per cent of the mishaps could be charged to true mechanical failure."

One may conclude that more than 90 per cent of those accidents may be attributed to carelessness--thoughtlessness--or lack of familiarity with the machine. The same safety precautions you would use with a gun - automobile - or a power saw also apply to the power mower, or in fact, to any golf course tool or equipment.

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#### FIELD DAY DATES

August 11 - Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J.  
(10:30 a.m.) Leader - Dr. Ralph E. Engel

September 14 - University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R. I.  
Leader - Dr. C. Richard Skogley

September 21-22 - Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.  
Leader - Dr. Joseph Duich

(Note: These dates originally were September 7 & 8 but have been changed to 21 & 22.)

There will be no Beltsville Field Day this year. Dr. Felix Juska is holding to a 2-year schedule and his next one is scheduled for August 1961.

# Eastern Turfletter

USGA GREEN SECTION

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U. S. POSTAGE  
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PERMIT NO. 366  
NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.