



UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION GREEN SECTION

Mid-Continent Turfletter

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SCHOOL FOR GOLF COURSE WORKERS

Golf course superintendents of the Denver area have taken a hand in providing better training for golf course workers. A training course is being offered through the Emily Griffith Opportunity School, a part of the Denver Public School system.

The following account is taken from a letter written by Mr. Richard McAndrew, Supervisor of Operation and Maintenance Training.

"The training was started at the request of a committee from the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association to the Emily Griffith Opportunity School. The committee expressed a need for training of golf course workers in the basic knowledge of management. In accordance with our usual practice, the feasibility of the request was evaluated, a curriculum advisory committee was appointed which included representatives of the superintendents association. After careful consideration by the advisory committee, a course of study was developed and an instructor recommended, Mr. Theodore Rupel.

The committee came to the conclusion that the first class should include all of the superintendents who wished to participate so that there would be substantial agreement and acceptance of methods taught. It would then be reasonable to believe that as other golf course workers complete the course they will find a good basis of understanding.

The first class is well on the way and will be completed in August; the second class will begin in the fall of 1962. Class attendance has been very high. There is evidence that interest is good, and we are looking forward to other supporting courses in this field."

BERMUDAGRASS WINTERKILL - CAUSES AND CURES

The winter of 1961-62 was a very bad one for bermudagrass. Loss of turf occurred not only in the northern part of the bermudagrass region of adaptation, but also in areas such as Memphis where bermudagrass is well adapted.

There were at least four causes of death of bermudagrass. They were drying out (desiccation), drowning - where soils stay wet too long, disease and traffic damage.

Desiccation is perhaps the most common cause of winter damage. It occurs usually where there is no snow cover and in exposed areas where cold, drying winds may strike the turf. Even though soil may be moist prior to freezing, it can give up its moisture to the air through sublimation, a transition of moisture from the solid state directly to the gaseous state. Therefore, the grass may be injured by drying. The cure, of course, is to maintain moisture in the soil. Sometimes covering the soil to slow down moisture loss is effective and practical. "Brushing" of greens, by piling small tree branches on the green to catch and hold snow, erection of snow fences for the same purpose, and covering with clean straw are some of the ways to hold moisture. The addition of even small amounts of water during periods of milder weather can be effective in saving turf. Many superintendents make use of spray rigs to get a small amount of water on critical areas at times when the water system is not in operation.

Soil that is too wet is just as harmful as that which is too dry. Bermudagrass, or any other grass, may die because water-logged soils exclude oxygen from the root zone. Good drainage is the only solution to this problem. Excess water must be carried away by surface drainage and by internal or subsurface drainage. A failure to remove excess water, no matter what the reason, can cause trouble. Poorly drained areas are more susceptible to ice sheet damage in the spring, when snow begins to melt and then freezing temperatures occur before the water drains away.

Diseases may contribute to several kinds of winterkill and may seldom be the sole cause of turf loss. The occurrence of "spring deadspot" does appear to be caused by disease, though the causal organism has not yet been determined. Chemical treatment holds some promise for control of this problem.

Traffic is a problem on growing or on dormant turf; but it appears to be more damaging when turf is dormant, particularly in the case of bermudagrass and Zoysia. The cure for such damage is, obviously, to keep the traffic off or sacrifice the area involved. Because such damage occurs most frequently where traffic concentrates, it may be possible to set aside a small portion of a tee for winter use and then plan to resod this area the following spring. Even barriers to guide traffic during critical times may be useful.

"Springkill" rather than "winterkill" may be a more apt term for damage on dormant bermuda. Many a superintendent has noted that his turf appeared all right when an early warm spell occurred, but after the late "cold snap" it did not recover. After dormancy begins to break and the growth processes begin, grass seems much more susceptible to damage by freezing, drying, and attacks by disease producing organisms. It appears that the most critical period is the last freeze in the spring. Let's hope some damage can be avoided in 1962-63.

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS

According to Seed World (July 27, 1962), production of common or natural-grown Kentucky bluegrass seed this year in the North Central District and the Kentucky District is forecast at 19,500,000 pounds of cured seed which is 30 percent larger than last year's crop of 14,870,000 pounds. This will produce approximately 9,000,000 pounds of clean seed from the 1962 crop compared with 5,560,000 produced last year.

COMING EVENTS

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| September 10-11..... | Midwest Field Days
Purdue University
Lafayette, Indiana |
| September 19-20..... | Third Annual Lawn and Turf
Conference
University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri |
| September 25..... | St. Louis Field Day
Link's Nursery - Westwood
Country Club
St. Louis, Missouri |
| October 4-5..... | New Mexico Turf Conference
New Mexico State University
University Park, N. M. |
| October 8-9..... | Rocky Mountain Turf Conference
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado |
| October 17-19..... | Central Plains Turfgrass
Conference
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas |

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