UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION
GREEN SECTION

NORTHEASTERN OFFICE
College of Agriculture
Rutgers University
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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NORTHEASTERN TURFLETTER

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SUPERINTENDENTS' MONTHLY MEETINGS

One of the things that has come to the attention of the writer in his travels in the Northeast is the excellence of the meetings held monthly by each local superintendents' association. Each local organization sets aside one day, usually the first Tuesday of each month, to call members together to talk turf. This gives superintendents the opportunity to get together on problems of mutual interest, and to pick up new ideas and new thoughts in the field of turf.

Generally, the meetings follow the pattern of golf, dinner, business and educational features. Guest speakers are invited to talk on problems of interest within the region. Meetings of this sort are invaluable to the superintendent, and things learned help pay off on the golf course in terms of better turf.

Many club officials are unaware that such important monthly meetings take place. However, once they do attend they invariably come back for more and become regular attendants. Some local associations set aside one monthly meeting to which each superintendent brings the chairman of his green committee. What better opportunity is there for green committee officials and superintendents to get together to talk problems of mutual interest in the golf field?

TURF FIELD DAYS

The months of August and September bring to us three important Turf Field Days in the Northeast:

August 3, 1954 - Turf Field Day, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Leader: Dr. Ralph E. Engel.

August 19, 1954 - 23rd Annual Rhode Island Turf Field Days, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island. Leader: Dr. Jesse A. DeFrance.

September 7, 8, 1954 - Turf Field Days, Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa. Leader: Prof. H. B. Musser.

Turf Field Days give the superintendent the opportunity to see what leading research men are doing in the turfgrass program. Innumerable things of interest are displayed

at these field day meetings where those in attendance can see first hand the results of management and maintenance techniques on many different types of grasses. Newer chemicals, newer machinery and newer ideas all add to the interest of the day. If each person were to bring but one idea home with him - one which would mean a saving of some sort or other on the golf course - the cost of attendance would be repaid manyfold. Many clubs encourage their superintendents to attend all field days, turf conferences and turf meetings by defraying the costs incurred by the superintendent to attend these meetings. This undoubtedly is one of the best budget investments golf course officials can make.

WINTERKILL OF TURFGRASSES

This past year there has been more evidence of winterkill to turfgrasses on golf courses in this region than in any previous year in the experience of the writer. The very dry fall weather that we experienced last year undoubtedly was one of the major causes. Isolated patches of fairway turfgrasses suffered from desiccation and failed to recover in the spring as they normally did in other years. The grasses which seemed to be hit the hardest were the isolated patches of shallow-rooted creeping bentgrasses of the type that tend to build a thatched layer quickly. Grasses surrounding these areas recovered as they did in the past, but these off-type bentgrasses did not recover.

As more and more bentgrass is being used on golf course fairways in this region, it is becoming increasingly important that regard for the practices advocated to combat thatch be carefully considered. Management practices - principally aeration, liming and fertilizing - employed to the proper degree to promote beneficial bacterial growth to work against thatch build-up in fairway turf are of paramount importance. It may be necessary to give special treatment to the off-type bentgrasses referred to above through increased management.

NEW CREEPING BENTGRASS STRAIN

A new creeping bentgrass strain will soon be released by Prof. H. B. Musser of Penn State. This strain, as yet unnamed, is one that has been outstanding in performance in Professor Musser's plots during six years of testing. To those of you who have visited the Penn State turf plots, this selection bore the experimental number of 10(37)4. This strain is also one of the parent selections used in the production of Polycross creeping bentgrass seed. When it is released officially we will attempt to list some sources from which stolons of this important strain can be obtained. This strain came from the 17th green of the Lulu Temple Country Club, where its superior turf making qualities were first noted. It has performed so well at Penn State that you'd be missing a good bet if you didn't plan to test it in a small nursery area on your golf course when possible to do so.

A TRICK OF THE TRADE

I'm certain that at one time or other you have seen the type of smoothing or leveling device that road construction men use in their work. It is simply a board 2" x 12" (about 12 feet long) which has narrow boards fastened to the end at an angle, allowing it to be dragged in an upright position over newly-poured cement as a leveler.

Recently it was our pleasure to construct a putting green for The President on the White House Lawn. In this project, Jimmy Thomas, Superintendent of the Army

Navy Country Club, Arlington, Virginia, who assisted in this project, suggested the use of this device to plane and smooth the top surface before laying the finished Polycross bentgrass sod. It did a wonderful job of leveling. It took out all the high spots and deposited topsoil in the low spots. It did a tremendous job of planing and smoothing the surface preparatory to laying the sod. As soil does not flow or move so easily as does poured cement, it is necessary to put some pressure on the board in order to do a good job of smoothing the surface. On newly-constructed tees, it should also be a good device to use as a level before seeding or sodding.

UREA FERTILIZERS

We feel that a word about fertilizers that contain urea is in order. In our travels in the Northeast we have noticed what we felt was too lush a growth of turfgrasses. By inquiring into the fertilizer practices employed we learned that the superintendent was using a prepared balanced fertilizer which was marked ("contains --% organic nitrogen"). In checking with the manufacturers of each product we learned that a good portion of the organic nitrogen listed was derived from urea.

Under the Fertilizer Laws, urea is classified as an organic source of nitrogen. Urea, however, does not act as a true organic. It is very fast acting - comparable to ammonium nitrate or ammonium sulphate - and thus lush growth occurs and the user is puzzled as to why this occurs.

We offer no objections to the use of urea fertilizers as long as the superintendent is fully aware that he is using urea, so that he knows how to handle it to prevent lush growth and to prevent the burning of the turf.

PROTECTION FROM SURFACE-FEEDING INSECTS

Remember that the insecticide applied in the past to protect your turfgrasses against grubs, sod webworms and other insects that attack roots will not protect your grasses against attacks from surface-feeding insects, such as chinch bugs. If attacks occur, chlordane applied at one-fourth to one-third the normal rate of application of 10 pounds of technical or 100% chlordane to the acre is suggested. If repeated attacks occur from new broods, more than one such treatment is needed.

HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED!

Superintendent John Finley, of the Deal Golf and Country Club, recalls the day when golf course laborers were required to bring their own shovel, hoe, and rake to work.

Northeastern Turfletter

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