

UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION
GREEN SECTION
Southwestern Office

Texas A & M College

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS



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Southwestern Turfletter

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BENTGRASS OR RYEGRASS FOR WINTER GREENS

Throughout most of the Southern states, superintendents are now making plans for overseeding their greens with a winter grass. Ryegrass has been the standard for many years, and most of the courses in the South will have ryegrass greens again this winter. Ryegrass makes a very satisfactory winter turf. It forms an excellent putting surface and it will provide a great deal of pleasure until the beginning of hot weather during the following year. Ryegrass has one very bad disadvantage, however. This disadvantage is the transition period, when the ryegrass begins to go out and Bermudagrass must come back. This transition period ordinarily occupies about three weeks, and it is very difficult to maintain even reasonably good putting surfaces during this time.

Because of the fact that players are subjected to an inconvenience during the period of transition from ryegrass to Bermuda, many clubs have begun to use bentgrass for their winter greens. Bentgrass also makes a very satisfactory winter green, and the transition period is not nearly so pronounced. Bentgrass goes out more gradually and allows the Bermudagrass to come in gradually, so that in most cases the superintendent cannot define the exact period when the transition from bent to Bermuda was made. Putting surfaces at no time become very poor and players are not so apt to complain about poor putting conditions. Bentgrass also has some disadvantages. The chief disadvantage is in the matter of getting a stand established in the fall. Bentgrass seeds are very much smaller than ryegrass seeds and one must be more careful in preparing the seedbeds so that the seeds come in contact with the soil and have the proper conditions for germination. Bentgrass cannot be buried as deeply under topdressing as ryegrass and greater care must be taken to see that the surface does not dry out during the germination period. Even if one is successful in obtaining uniform germination in a relatively short while, it requires a great deal of time for the bent to make sufficient growth for a good putting surface. Consequently, the bent green ordinarily does not begin to form a good surface until about February. For the remaining months of the bent's life, that is from February through May or June, depending upon the portion of the South and the climatic conditions, the players will enjoy excellent greens.

The choice to be made is this. Will you sacrifice good greens during the fall and early winter in order to get away from the transition period; or will you sacrifice good greens for a few weeks in early summer in order to enjoy good putting greens in late fall and early winter?

Some other considerations may enter into the decision. One is the relative cost of seed. Bentgrass is considerably more expensive on the basis of price per pound than is ryegrass seed. This difference in cost may be offset, however, by the difference in seeding rate. While ryegrass seeding rates may vary from 20 pounds to 75 pounds per 1000 square feet, the rate of bentgrass seeding varies from 3 pounds to 10 pounds per 1000 square feet.

There are firm believers on both sides of the question. If you have been using one type of winter grass and have decided to give the other species a try, it is suggested that you not make the change all in one season. If you have been using rye, why not plant your practice green to bent this year to see whether or not it offers more pleasure and less trouble to your members? Each club must make its own decision. The foregoing thoughts have been set down as a guide in helping you to decide which of the grasses would suit your purpose better.

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St. Louis Field Day

Superintendents, chairmen of green committees and other club officials of the St. Louis District were treated to another enjoyable annual Field Day on Sept. 14. Mr. Leo Bauman and the Westwood Country Club were hosts to approximately 65 persons who looked over experimental plots in the afternoon, enjoyed a fine dinner at the club, and listened to some after dinner talks about turf. Dr. Wm. H. Daniel of the Midwest Turf Foundation and Marvin Ferguson, USGA Green Section, showed colored slides.

Superintendents of the Mississippi Valley Association finished off the day with a business meeting in which they made further plans for the large part they will play in the production of the forthcoming 26th Annual Turfgrass Conference and Show which will be held at the Jefferson Hotel in St. Louis January 16-21, 1955.

Weights for Cultivation Equipment

Are you bothered by the necessity of using sandbags and similar weights to get your aerifying equipment to penetrate? Jimmy Gamewell, Superintendent at the Midland Country Club, has found a solution. Jimmy mounts a 55 gallon drum on top of his aerifying machine. When filled with water, the drum provides more than 450 pounds of additional weight. A valve can be opened to drain the water - and the weight - when the cultivating job is finished. The machine can be transported with the drum empty. The drum itself does not add a great deal of weight. Jimmy has devised a great many ingenious alterations of equipment that help him to do a better job and to do it more easily. This particular innovation is one that might well be adopted by others.

CHELATED IRON COMPOUNDS FOR CHLOROSIS

Almost all golf course superintendents whose golf courses are located on highly alkaline soil have trouble with iron chlorosis. Symptoms are pale yellow-green leaves and lack of vigor. The common control practice is to spray the area with iron sulfate at the rate of about 3 ounces per 1000 square feet. The application must be repeated about every six weeks during the summer months.

Recently a number of compounds have been developed called chelated iron compounds. Some experimental work with these iron containing materials has indicated that they can be applied to the soil and that the iron will be kept in a state available to plants, in spite of the effects of highly alkaline soil. Thus far, the Green Section knows of no experimental work on turfgrasses wherein these products have been used. The compounds have been used in the case of citrus trees and other plants that suffer from iron chlorosis. It seems that a trial of this material by golf course superintendents would be worthwhile. If it were effective, it would eliminate the need for spraying so frequently. This office can furnish the names of manufacturers of these compounds upon request.

BE SURE TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE

Every golf course superintendent in the Southwest ought to attend one or more of these conferences. And bring your chairman along. If you gain one small bit of knowledge it will pay you well for the time you have spent. The programs are arranged to allow time for you to ask questions concerning your own problems. The combined knowledge of your fellow workers can often produce a solution.

October 20, 21, 22.

Central Plains Turf Foundation Annual Conference. Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas. Headquarters - Wareham Hotel.

December 6, 7, 8.

Oklahoma Turfgrass Conference. Oklahoma A. & M. College, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Headquarters - The Student Union. For additional information write to Dr. Wayne Huffine, Agronomy Dept., Oklahoma A. & M. College.

December 13, 14, 15.

Texas Turfgrass Conference. Texas A. & M. College, College Station, Texas. Headquarters - Memorial Student Center. For additional information write to Dr. Ethan Holt, Agronomy Dept., Texas A. & M. College.

January 16-21, 1955

26th National Turfgrass Conference and Show. St. Louis, Missouri. Headquarters - The Jefferson Hotel. For additional information, write to Agar M. Brown, Golf Course Superintendents Association, St. Charles, Illinois.

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