

UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION  
Green Section--Western Office

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*Western Turfletter*

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No. 3

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TURF CONFERENCES

For the past several years annual Turf Conferences have been held in Denver, Pullman, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Experts on all phases of turf culture travel from all over the nation to participate on these programs devised to help increase the knowledge of our USGA member club's superintendents. Your Green Section believes so thoroughly in the value of this yearly exchange of information that it is taking this space to encourage all of its member clubs to send their superintendent to the conference closest to home. The slight cost involved will be many times repaid in improved turf for the individual club. The Conferences for 1953 are as follows:

September 22-23

Pacific Northwest Turf Conference -  
Washington State College, Pullman,  
Washington -- Mr. Alvin G. Law,  
Agronomy Dept., U.S.C., Pullman,  
Washington

October 8

Northern California Turf Grass Conference -  
University of California, Davis, California.  
Dr. Robert Deering, Department of Land-  
scape Management, Davis, Calif.

October 12-13

Southern California Turf Conference &  
Field Day - Riviera C.C. Dr. V. T.  
Stoutenyer, Department of Floriculture  
& Ornamental Horticulture, University of  
California at Los Angeles.

October 17

Southwest Turf Conference - Agricultural  
Experiment Station, Tucson, Arizona.  
Mr. Charles J. Treacy, Golf Course  
Superintendent, Phoenix C.C., Phoenix,  
Arizona.

October 19

Rocky Mountain Turf Conference & Equipment  
Show - Park Hill C.C., Denver, Colorado.  
Mr. Robert O. Shearer, President Park Hill  
C.C.

In addition to talks by local turf authorities and your Western Director of the USGA Green Section, Dr. O. J. Noer, Agronomist, Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, Dr. James Watson, Agronomist, Toro Company, and Mr. Tom Mascaro, President, West Point Products Company will actively participate at each conference. The last mentioned are nation-wide authorities on turf problems.

POA ANNUA - FRIEND OR FOE? - IT DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU ARE

As most of us know the controversy on annual bluegrass rages hot and heavy all over the nation. Most of the publicity regarding this grass has been definitely against it, and with due justification, because in much of the nation it is too treacherous to rely upon. However, on some of our Western courses Poa annua leaves little to be desired from the standpoint of playing quality and ease of maintenance. Further it possesses the devilish qualities of being both difficult to control while on the same hand being impossible to hold all season. At the risk of putting words in the mouths of some of our participating clubs I offer my impressions of how our USGA courses regard this "Prince or Pauper" as the case may be.

Broadmoor G.C. -- Colorado Springs

"We are not only doing everything possible to encourage Poa, but are actually plugging it into our newly constructed nine. We have tried all of the improved bentgrasses as witness the Pie Green constructed in cooperation with the USGA Green Section. It may not be suited to other areas, but for our purposes it beats any bent that we have ever seen."

Park Hill C.C. -- Denver

"As near as we can see other courses have as much or more trouble with bentgrass than we have with Poa. For years we have encouraged Poa and shall continue to do so until something better comes along. A Poa green is free from grain and thatch and presents the ultimate in putting quality to our tremendously heavy play."

Portland G.C. -- Portland

"At the time of Mr. Wilson's visit our greens were being attacked by copper-spot disease. Thorough investigation proved to our satisfaction that it was only the Poa and velvet bent that were being damaged. The creeping bent strains were resistant to the attack. Fungicides cost money, and bent is a good grass for this area. Therefore we would be better off without the Poa, but how can you control it when it acts like a true perennial under our climatic conditions?"

Manito G. & C.C. -- Spokane

"Poa is the most susceptible grass we have to snowmold disease, and snowmold is our most serious problem. On greens we treat with a fungicide to control the disease. On tees and fairways it is economically infeasible to spray costly fungicides. Thus we would be better off without the Poa and would like to get rid of it".

Everett C.C. -- Everett, Washington

"Until the Green Section dropped by for a visit, we had always believed that velvet bent was doing the best job in our greens. Now we find that what we thought was velvet is actually a fine strain of Poa. Therefore we believe that the Green Section should promote Poa research for improved and disease resistant strains."

Del Paso C.C. -- Sacramento

"For the past two years we have lost large patches of putting green turf in low spots on poorly drained greens, and also some turf on the green collars. In every instance it has been only the Poa that has vanished when temperatures hit the hundreds. Therefore, our golfers consider Poa to be the worst possible weed." Note: Dr. Hagan has been completely unsuccessful in trying to establish a Poa turf in his depth of rooting studies. The excessive summer heat causes it to go out even under the type of management that tends to baby the Poa.

Los Angeles C.C. -- Los Angeles

"We hate it and love it depending on where it is growing. As a winter cover in our bermuda fairways Poa can't be beat. In the greens Poa is entirely too treacherous during our warm humid July."

Hacienda G.C. -- La Habra

"Because of its excellence less than twenty miles to the northwest of us at one club in Los Angeles we have tended to encourage Poa until this summer. Since July it has caused nothing but headaches. Brownpatch disease continues to be active in the Poa even though we have treated with mercurials as often as three times a week. Brownpatch has taken out large patches of Poa while the creeping bent remains strong, vigorous and undamaged. As rapidly as possible we are making every effort to get back on the right track which for our club is bentgrass."

Poa's Merits

1. Perfect putting qualities. Complete freedom from grain.
2. Excellent winter color. It outgrows bentgrass during the cool season.
3. Shade tolerant. Does well under wet soggy conditions.
4. Ability to perpetuate itself by seeding under continuous close mowing.
5. Ability to withstand traffic and compaction.

Poa's Faults

1. Susceptible to every known disease in the west.
2. Inability to withstand extremely hot temperatures.
3. Poor appearance when seeding. By nature it is an annual.
4. Requires frequent irrigation. Shallow rooted.
5. Limited adaptation even within a narrow geographical area.

How to Encourage Poa

Allow clippings to remain on green at time of seeding. Water frequently and keep up feeding program during cool weather when Poa is most apt to respond. Stimulate research interest in breeding and selection studies.

How to Discourage Poa

Use lead arsenate in Fall to inhibit seed germination. Bulk of feeding to benefit bentgrass. Experiment with sodium arsenite at 1/4 and 1/2 ounces to 1,000 square feet to control Poa in the vegetative state. Plug in bent from the nursery.

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This Is Your

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