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Weed Control, "Air Conditioning" Are Greens Meet Features

FALL meetings of greens groups in six midwestern sections, held as part of the USGA Green Section work, revealed highly promising results from the Section's work in weed control and from experiments in preventing green troubles by proper circulation of air.

Much larger than usual was the attendance at most of the meetings. Sessions were held at Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Detroit. Dr. John Monteith, Jr., technical chief of the Green Section, presided. At the Mill Road farm Midwest experimental garden, 160 greenkeepers, chairmen and supply men registered. Green-chairmen attendance at the fall meetings was estimated at slightly less than 10%. This is tip-off to USGA difficulty in financing vital work of the Green Section. As usual, attending chairmen marvelled at work done by the Section.

Impressive results were shown at test plots on chemical weed control but, as Monteith explained, the Section hesitates to recommend treatment in its present stage because of risks and uncertainties of treatment which the Section hopes to clear away if money is available to carry tests to conclusion. At the Midwest garden, crabgrass and dandelion control experiments, carried on under the supervision of C. A. Tregillus, were amazingly effective on some plots. Time of application and weather conditions seem to be important factors in weed treatments with which USGA is experimenting.

Fertilizer tests at the Midwest garden, now in their eighth year, showed the necessity of continuous attention to turf research work.

Highly interesting and significant was the work in air circulation as a greens trouble preventive brought into sharp focus at the Cincinnati CC by Jim Morrison. Greens located where there is but little air circulation were given treatment by electric fans. There was a pronounced reduction in brown patch, dollar spot and scald, although this year at Cincinnati results were not as great as last year, due probably to this season's greater humidity. Tests of this treatment were made at Arlington with excellent results.

Use of fans in circulating air first was suggested several years ago by Alex Pirie, veteran supt. of Old Elm club (Chicago
district), at a Green Section annual meeting in Chicago. Pirie ran wires out to a green near the clubhouse, turned on an oscillating fan at nights and kept a green he'd been having a lot of trouble with.

When Pirie told about it at that meeting his tale was generally received with yawns and giggles. He now finds himself in the satisfied status of the fellow in the ads who was laughed at when he sat down to play the piano but who made them all gasp and applaud. Monteith, observing how betterment of air circulation around greens by tree removal improved green condition, took up the fan idea and worked with Morrison who was applying the fan idea with success at Cincinnati.

There is some objection about fan noise from householders in the vicinity of greens. Morrison has found that a few hour's operating of fans toward morning is as effective as all-night operation. Fan circulation also makes it possible to get work done on greens earlier. Current cost at Cincinnati has been about $5 a month. Use of water motors in fan operating has been suggested as has been fans as large as airplane propellers, mounted on course tractors and operated by tractor motor.

Question box sessions were conducted at several fall meetings. Questions reflected severity of maintenance conditions this year and the dismal fact that greenkeepers are put in the middle by acts of the Almighty from the top and catching hell from here below.

Monteith remarked he had observed fertilizer deficiencies now are being seriously felt at courses. Regarding height of green cutting in hot weather, Monteith said it made no great difference from the grass cultural standpoint, but longer greens will hold a ball better without excess watering, if members will stand for longer greens.

The Section chief also pointed out that failure to apply enough chemical treatment to greens had been responsible for part of this year's turf disease and reminded greenkeepers that chemicals applied one day might be washed out by a rain later that day and chemical effectiveness removed. Lime deficiency, in his opinion, accounted for a lot of scald he had observed.

The best time to sow grass seed or plant stolons is when Mother Nature does this work—in the fall just before the autumn rains.