Grau’s Answers
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Q: Our greens committee and myself are trying to determine how to improve fairways and tees. Fairways have not received the proper amount of food for growth. They have received little fertilizer in years. The only thing that has been used is lime, except on the approaches. We aerify fairways and tees each year, but have not fed the fairways much. Existing grass is chewings fescue and Kentucky blue and rye. Even with improper feeding, the fairways are “fair.” They are thin as opposed to lush, and there is much silver crab and crowfoot in them and around greens.

Another club near us is changing to Bermuda fairways and is keeping its bent greens. We have thought about this but are hesitant because of fear of the Bermuda crowding out our greens.

I have noticed that you and O. J. Noer have endorsed Merion and K-31 for fairways with Merion on the tees. Also, you have mentioned other grasses, depending on location. If we were to go into a program of seeding and feeding our fairways, what would you suggest as best grass for this area? Our tees will not hold up during heavy play because of poor turf. Have Bermuda fairways and bent greens been proven compatible partners on the same course? Would you recommend them in this location?

If you recommend a fairway grass, will you please give us your plan for such a transition including lbs. per acre, time of year to begin, preparation and feeding?

Another question concerns weeds. We spend a lot for removing weeds from greens. Can you tell us if it has been proved that there is a chemical that can safely be applied to bent greens that will control crabgrass and not harm the bent.

We are located in western North Carolina; Elevation 2200 ft.; Greens — Mixture of Seaside, Colonial and Highland bent; Fairways and Tees — Red Top, Ky. Blue and annual Rye; No Fairway Water; Rainfall usually adequate, 12 months — 59.86 ins.; Heavy play during June, July and Aug.; Soil is heavy as opposed to sandy.

A: It is tremendously encouraging to have your frank admission concerning lack of plant food. The first step is to draw soil samples from all tees and fairways and have them tested for pH, Ca, Mg, P, and K. Do not request a test for N — it would tell you nothing of value. Send me a pH copy of the test results.

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The first step in fertilization, until we have knowledge of P and K, is to apply straight nitrogen in a non-leaching, long-lasting form. As soon as possible this spring apply to tees and fairways 4 lbs. of N in one application. If you were to use one of the 38% N materials, for example, it would require 450 lbs. to the acre (or about 10 lbs. of material to 1,000 sq. ft). This treatment will be the start of a long-time program and is basic to anything you intend to do in the line of seeding or sprigging.

In the absence of a sound, generous feeding program, annual aerifying may help to keep weeds and weedy grasses active. There is no need to think about chemical weed control until you plant the right grass and feed it adequately.

Your course is known to me. So is the other course which plans Bermuda fairways. Yours is not considered a proper candidate for Bermuda fairways. It is not because the Bermuda would crowd out your greens but because there is another grass that will be much more economical in every way. I refer to zoysia.

You could grow Merion – Ky 31 fairways and Merion tees but in your area the maintenance costs would be much higher than for zoysia. Merion demands at least twice as much fertilization.

Here is a plan for your fairways. Fertilize soon this spring, as suggested immediately after spring aerifying. Secure zoysia japonica seed so that you can plant the selected areas at 20 lbs. to the acre soon after aerifying. Mix 20 lbs. of zoysia seed with 100 lbs. of the same nitrogen fertilizer that you will have used previously. Broadcast uniformly over fairway areas. You will not need to mash the seeding nor will you need to change your mowing schedule. You will not see much Zoysia turf the first year – only small seedlings. You will see real improvement during the second year. Virtually all summer weeds gradually will be choked. It is significant that goosegrass will not grow in zoysia turf. No chemical weed control will be necessary. No irrigation will be required. Bluegrass, fescue and poa annua will crowd in and provide much green color during winter and early spring. During June, July and August, you will have excellent turf – but no better than during the other 9 months.

Either zoysia or Bermuda will try to crowd bent greens. Don’t let them in! Weekly power edging keeps the greens free from invasion.

Your present greens can be invaded much more easily than greens of Penncross bent, for example. Penncross is your bent. Seed it after thorough spiking (sow at ½ lb. to 1,000 sq. ft mixed with 5 lbs. of granular, non-burning nitrogen fertilizer). This bent is economical and will gradually replace the weak bents which you now have. Also, it will help to keep out weedy grasses.

If you decide in favor of zoysia fairways, your feeding program will be one application a year to supply between 175 and 220 lbs. of N per acre per year.

There are two ways in which you can approach the weed problem in your greens. First set up and follow a PMA (mercurial) schedule.
of treatments (as recommended by the manufacturer). Second, sterilize all of your top-dressing with methyl bromide under a cover. See your dealer for assistance in setting it up. By using weed-free top-dressing you will cover the weed seeds now present and they will have difficulty becoming re-established.

We have said nothing so far about tees. For them you can grow zoysia sod (or U-3 Bermuda, if you prefer) in a nursery. When it is solid you can re-turf the tees with good ready-to-play sod. Also, you can grow a Merion sod nursery for those tees which are too shady for Bermuda or zoysia. Zoysia will thrive in shade where Bermuda will die for lack of sun. Some tees may be split down the middle, using Merion on one side for winter play, and a warm-season grass on the other side for summer play. Tees have to be large to permit this plan to work.

115 Attend Seminar Held by Mid-Atlantic PGA

Mid-Atlantic section of the PGA held its annual education seminar at Cole Field House, University of Maryland, Feb. 29-Mar. 1, with 115 pros in attendance. Max Elbin of Burning Tree CC and Roger Peacock of Sligo CC, Silver Spring, Md., were co-chairmen of the two-day program. It covered advertising, merchandising, accounting, teaching, psychology of learning and other subjects of interest to pro operators.

Speakers at the first day’s gathering included George P. Lamb, attorney, author and lecturer, who spoke on the place of golf in business; Bill Ford of the MacGregor Golf Co. advertising dept. who discussed marketing and advertising; and Steve Comings, Southeastern University accounting professor, who told the pros how to install and operate a simplified accounting system.

The first day’s teaching program was conducted by Al Houghton, Princes George CC, George Bird of Richmond, Va., and Leo Fraser of Atlantic City CC.

Eddie Ault, golf architect of Washington, D. C., was the leadoff speaker on Mar. 1. He talked on the interrelationship of the work of the professional, supt. and architect. Dr. Warren Johnson spoke on the psychology of learning and Prof. Alfred A. Crowell of the University of Maryland journalism dept., described methods of setting up a pro public relations program.

Roger Peacock and Al Jamison handled the second day’s teaching program. Peacock’s subject was “Tips for Beginners and Comments on the Swing.” Jamison summarized the techniques of teaching.