Outlook for the sensible seventies

Were I young today I would choose turf as my life's work, just as I did in 1927 when starting my college career. I would embrace turf more warmly now because I have seen many of the rewards that it offers. No profession that I know offers such a wide variety of opportunities to the eager young person who wants to learn.

Turf is a multi-billion dollar industry that covers a broad field of goods and services. It is no haven for the shirker, but there are ample rewards for the energetic and the industrious. It is a thrill to go to the International Turfgrass Conference and to talk to some of the bright happy young men who are securely launched on their careers in turfgrass. As one talks with them, one becomes infected with their enthusiasm and realizes that they learned from good teachers who believed in them and who motivated them to perform to the limits of their capacities. Let us be eternally grateful to dedicated teachers who have the capacity to guide and to motivate young people. Let us resolve to bend every effort toward the goal of training more outstanding teachers to insure the future of the turfgrass industry. Let us resolve to train more teachers who can motivate young men to move into positions of leadership and give them the necessary training.

One day soon the extension services in the 50 states will find ways to increase their staffs to include more turfgrass extension specialists. There are more taxpayers interested in better turf than in any other phase of agriculture. County agents are realizing that turfgrass rapidly is becoming a vital part of their economy and that requests for assistance are increasing.

Research workers in turf may be found in many disciplines at many different types of institutions the world over. They cover soils, grasses, fertilizers, pesticides, pathology, entomology and other schools that impinge upon the world of turf. Funds for research are meagre. Much depends on "grants" from industry. More funds must come from tax-supported sources. Private industry contributes vast sums of money and years of effort to perfect products that can produce better turf.

In years past a salesman in industry was known as a "peddler." No more! Today, and in the future, salesmen help to disseminate accurate, useful information while they represent their employers and his products. This approach takes talent! Industry is looking for bright well-trained personnel who are a credit to the firm and to the turfgrass industry.

As we move into the sensible seventies we will see a significant trend toward professionalism as more trained men are motivated to improve their standards. We must train more good teachers who, in turn, can train the future turfgrass managers, extension specialists, research personnel and representatives of industrial firms. The industry will command respect and will grow in stature as each of us continues to improve his professional image.
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Q.—Are you still “high” on Kentucky 31 fescue for turf on golf courses? What are the pitfalls?

(Maryland)

A.—Kentucky 31 fescue is an excellent turfgrass if it is understood and if it is used properly where it belongs. It will be most useful in the transition zone where it can bridge the gap between warm- and cool-season grasses where neither can be depended upon year in and year out. In this zone it is providing good fairway turf where it has been seeded heavily (seven to eight pounds seed to 1,000 square feet) in later summer; where it gets six pounds N per thousand annually; and where it is cut seven-eighths to one inch high with sharp mowers. Irrigation can be cut to the bone, and weed control is practically unnecessary.

It is a good grass for roughs, but with bent or bluegrass fairways the odd escaped plant can be mighty objectionable. Interest in this grass is growing. I can’t list all the pitfalls but I can help evaluate if someone seriously is considering using it.

Q.—We had good snow cover until just recently, and now I notice an unusually heavy attack of snowmold. We fed late with a high-nitrogen (inorganic) complete fertilizer. Could this possibly have contributed to the snowmold?

(Minnesota)

A.—The chances are very good that the late feeding predisposed the grass to snowmold attack, particularly so since you used inorganic N. Under these circumstances, a slow-release material would be far safer. I would hope that you used mercury as a preventive.

Q.—We keep hearing about the American Society of Agronomy. Would I, a golf course superintendent, be eligible for membership? Would it be to my advantage to hold membership? If I decide to do it how would I go about it?

(Texas)

A.—The American Society of Agronomy is the largest scientific society of its kind. Turfgrass has been a part of A.S.A. since 1946. Many turfgrass articles reporting research are printed in the Journal and other publications of the society. At the annual meetings there is a meeting of Division C-5, the turfgrass division.

Yes, you are eligible for membership. You will get more out of being a member if you like to read research papers and if you would attend the annual meetings.

If interested, write to Matthias Stelly, Executive Secretary, 677 S. Segoe Rd., Madison, Wis.