People problems

This was the subject of my lecture on March 12th before the First International Panorama of Golf held at Palm Springs, Calif. This brief review is intended to cause each reader to think, “How many of my problems really are turf problems and how many of my problems are caused by people?”

A superintendent starts a calcium arsenate program to control Poa annua. The membership had not been warned as to the potential. Heat and humidity took the Poa out faster than anticipated. A crash program, with the assistance of a consultant, put the course in shape with the help of new grasses and a revised fertilizer program. Most of this situation had to do with people although it was called a turf problem. Essentially the problem was concerned with errors in judgment at several points.

Many recommendations for a fertilizer program have fallen on deaf ears because the material was considered as “too expensive.” The real problem was failure to understand the principles of the product involved.

A chairman decided to build the greens his way using layers of soil, cinders and horse manure. The bent roots penetrated less than one inch. In the nursery on unmodified native sandy loam soil the bent roots were 18 inches deep. Theirs was not a turf problem.

Everyone who has visited golf courses over a period of years could tell of many more such instances. Let’s do some sorting out of causes and consequences. In many cases we will find that people are responsible for most of our so-called turf problems.

Q.— We are on a UF-potash program on our fairways (phosphorus is very high). Our complaint is that we don’t get a “quick green” in the spring. What can you suggest?

A.— First, you haven’t been on the program long enough to achieve the desirable carryover which will give you the early greening you want. Second, I am not at all sure that this early green is what is best for the turf. Yes, you could apply

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