Redheads

keeps greens greener, traps cleaner!

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also have the skills to change some chromosomes so that Poa wouldn't die out under heat stress. Joe Valentine produced a better grass under "no control" conditions. Surely the research centers at ag schools could change Poa seed so it is more durable. (Pennsylvania) A—The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council is doing all it can to help Penn State do the kind of research work that will benefit all turfgrass users. (Thank you for your membership.) Poa has been an object of interest for years, not only at Penn State but at other turfgrass research centers. Investigations have gone to both extremes: 1) how to keep it and make it a better grass and 2) how to get rid of it so that improved grasses can thrive. On thing is crystal clear—it takes excellent management regardless of the route you take.

Poa annua is not a simple, single apomictic strain as is Merion Kentucky bluegrass. It is highly diverse, from short-lived annuals to long-lived perennials. I've seen highly desirable patches of Poa turf in old greens that persisted year after year throughout the summers. When seed from these patches was planted, something quite different developed. Yes, genetic improvement has been attempted, but it seems more logical to develop strong types of perennial turfgrasses that, under good management, can choke Poa to the point of extinction.

Several chemicals are being used to reduce Poa and to allow the better grasses to thrive. It seems to be a sensible approach.

Severe Poa invasions tend to point out certain inadequacies in management. I am not saying that your Poa problems resulted from mismanagement, but I would advise a thorough check of everything (water, phosphorus levels, N-K-S balance, lime competition by strong turf species, soil disturbance during period of Poa germination, to mention a few).

When you bring problems to the Turfgrass Council they will get attention. Don't hold your breath waiting for a change in Poa's genetics. It takes 10 to 15 years to develop and prove a new superior grass.

Q—We've heard about a soilless method of growing turf for sodding and we would like to know more about it. How does it work and what are the advantages? It is economical? (New York) A—Two such proposals have come to my attention. The first was demonstrated at V.P.I., Blacksburg, Va., where Dr. Schmidt grew turf from seed in a soilless medium in shallow trays using a sterile porous cinder-like material on which to germinate the seeds. Recently I've learned of a British process that uses an artificial peat slurry with a wetting agent and foamed plastic as a carrier for the seeds. The advantages claimed are: 1) uniformity, 2) no grading, 3) rapid establishment when laid and 4) no weeds. The grass mat can be grown in four to five weeks, ready to be laid in the use area. No data are available about cost. The idea has not caught on overwhelmingly. Yes, it does seem to have merit.

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CONVERSATIONS AMONG ARCHITECTS

Although it isn't much publicized, the annual meeting of the American Society of Golf Course Architects has a deep and far-reaching influence on golf.

Discussion among the architects would have been interesting, probably helpful, to the United States Golf Assn. and Royal & Ancient committees considering a change in golf ball specifications.

Architects admitted that rarely is there a par-five hole that can be built on a golf course for which amateur golfers pay. There are a few par-five holes for "strong backs and weak minds," but none of them are really noteworthy. With the present ball, most of those who can get sponsors for circuit work can reach the par fives in two big shots. Those who can't are close enough to chip or pitch for one putt.

The par-three holes or the short par fours are the ones that now separate the men from the boys and give the smart sharpshooters, who pay for the place, a chance to get a par with a four- or five-wood tee shot when the pro was using a medium iron.

In their casual talks, the architects searched, without much luck, for good, interesting, testing holes on courses where the design talent of expert playing professionals had been exercised. "They are good advertising, but are not by temperament or ability highly competent to design holes for the entertainment and testing of 99 per cent of golf players," was the architects' consensus on the collaboration of big name pros with experienced architects. It was suggested that there's big difference between golfers who play golf for fun and those who play for money.

The talk recalled Tommy Armour's comment, "I know we've got a lot of great golf architects, but where are our great golf courses?"

The architects have answers in the sites they were given on which to design golf courses. The Almighty Himself couldn't have put a decent golf course on those areas.

The architects tried to define a first-class architect. That's a problem that club managers, superintendents and professionals have been trying to solve with their membership qualifications and certification programs.

Some genuinely great courses that have stood the test of years have been designed by amateurs. Among them is Merion, which Hugh Wilson designed after studying British golf courses for six months. He got a famed quarry hole on the order of the one at Harry Vardon's course. Ganton. Maybe the big achievement was in not having succeeding green committees change it.

The architects continued to debate about the relationship between the architect and the building contractor. Some architects maintained that the development and use of competent golf course contractors provide the best protection first-class golf course designers have. They asserted that the golf architect represents the client, as other architects do in other fields.

The reverse argument was that an architect with a fully-qualified construction superintendent and sound advice from an agronomist and watering and drainage experts did more for the client than fellows who were primarily experts in earth moving.

After years of trial and error and success it was generally agreed that the United States Golf Assn. green construction specifications stood up well.

How to get a first-class construction foreman to represent the architect and think for him in emergencies was agreed to be one of the architect's toughest jobs after the course left the drawing board. Getting a genuinely first-class man to work with the course building crew and stay on as superintendent after the course is completed is one of the most difficult jobs in golf business, architects said. When such a man is secured, he is worth more than he is paid.

That kind of man saves the architect money, time and headaches plus the criticism architects get for not staying on the job. This man's advice in the choice of maintenance equipment is valuable, architects noted, because some equipment work very satisfactorily on some courses but don't work well on others.

Design and engineering to control the heavy and rising maintenance costs and difficulty in getting dependable labor accounted for considerable exchange of observations among architects.

Problems of coordinating golf course design and building sites, roads, landscaping and so on, in the golf-real estate developments, which are a large part of golf projects these days, were related. Too often the golf architect is called in too late in this planning and the right answer never can be found.

Most golfers seem to think they are golf architects. A few hours listening to validly competent, experienced architects talk about their responsibilities would be bright education for those who

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