



MID-ATLANTIC News Letter



PUBLISHED BY

MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS TO AID IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND MERIT

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FEBRUARY 1955
ANNUAL TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

Monday and Tuesday, February 7th and 8th, 1955 found the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents meeting at the Lord Baltimore Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland for their 15th annual two-day Conference. The attendance was right around the century mark.

We were pleased to have with us as visitors several of our Philadelphia friends: Tom Mascaro, Bob Pollock, Jr., Hugh Pollock, Frank Shuman, Paul Weiss, Frank Tull, Tom Coyne and Leo Cleary from New Jersey. Without a few of the boys from that area being present a Mid-Atlantic Conference would not be complete. It was also a pleasure to make the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. E.S. Pleasonton, grass growers from the Valentine Turfgrass Nursery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

At the group luncheon period on Tuesday, we had a very distinguished guest dine with us and say a few words: Dr. Wilson Elkins, new President of the University of Maryland. The Doctor plays golf and confesses to being a bogey shooter. He is very much interested in seeing a golf course built at the University.

Our program, as in the past, was under the auspices of the Extension Service of the University of Maryland with Dr. Ernest N. Cory directing. If we were to correctly label our yearly educational gathering, it should be titled "Cory's Annual Turfgrass Conference." We have run out of superlatives to properly express our appreciation to the good Doctor for his untiring efforts in our behalf; so once again we say with sincerity "Many Thanks." The dates set for the 1956 session are: Tuesday and Wednesday January 17th and 18th. The Lord Baltimore Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland remains the setting for the occasion.

There is an old saying "That sooner or later all things must come to an end." Yet, the memories of friendships and associations are with us always. It has been announced that two Mid-Atlantic friends of longstanding: Dr. Ernest N. Cory of the University of Maryland and Professor H.B. Musser of Pennsylvania State College are slated for retirement within a few years. Their contributions to turfgrass research and to the advancement of the golf course superintendent have been many. Those who follow after them will find a foundation that has been well laid and built.

An item of interest to all was announced at the recent Annual meeting of the United States Golf Association held in New York City. This year will see the establishment of two new Green Section Regional Turf Services: Our Mid-Atlantic Area is slated for one of them, the other goes to the New England States. Such an office costs the USGA \$15,000 a year to operate.

National Golf Foundation Inc., has made distribution of the funds raised by National Golf Day, 1954. \$ 12, 740 of the amount goes to the Benevolent, Relief and Educational fund of the PGA. On the basis of the above, this makes us wonder, should the Golf Course Superintendents of America fit into the picture?

The 26th National Turfgrass Conference and Show recently held at St. Louis, Missouri was outstanding in every respect. The attendance was good, the program and speakers were excellent, and the exhibits of golf equipment covered the field perfectly. (We even saw a motorized wheelbarrow.) Twenty of our boys were on hand and enjoyed every minute of the show. Jim Thomas was elected to the National Board of Directors and wishes to thank you for the support given him. Without it he could not have been elected. He says, " Jim Reid upheld the reputation of the Irish for being natural born politicians." Jim is a good campaign manager.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The Northeast region: Al. Radko

Feature of talk was kodachrome views of other courses, many of which showed that modernization would simplify maintenance costs. Pertinent comment: Don't be misled by the other fellow's budget; statistics are often misleading.

Water Management: Dr. O.J. Noer

Excessive moisture can cause more damage to turfgrass than extreme dryness. Golf players are justified in expecting putting greens to hold properly played pitch shots.

Proper soil texture, plus adequate fertilization will help to maintain resilient greens.

Ponded water is the cause of much trouble during periods of hot weather.

Soil moisture should never exceed its field capacity.

Soils need a proper balance of air at all times- over saturation prevents this.

High moisture content along with high humidity encourages diseases.

Changes in management, treatments and the like should be done in a gradual manner, not abruptly.

Be on the alert for all possible sources of seepage.

Be sure to use the proper kind of grass on watered fairways.

Water applications must be balanced with proper fertilization.

Philadelphia experiences: Charles J. Hallowell

Above normal moisture in May generally means trouble for the rest of the season.

Fall fertilization gives best results- spring applications are not as beneficial.

Deep applications of moisture needed during periods of drouth.

Remove all the old grasses for best results when introducing a new strain.

A new chemical. Di-sodium- Methyl- arsonate appears to have much value for the control of both smooth and silver crabgrass.

Trends in grasses: Jack Harper

Cool season grasses such as Kentucky blue grass and the fescues will not tolerate the close mowing that modern fairway management requires.

Weather statistics of the last fifteen years indicate that growing seasons are becoming longer and more extended.

Heavy increase in play shows a need for better grasses on small teeing areas.

Bermuda grass proving to be a popular sod around swimming pools, both belong to hot weather.

Hall's U-3 appears to be the best bermuda for the Mid-Atlantic area.

Bermudas like the bents can be divided into many different strains, some good, some bad.

Twenty-five years of Golf Course Management: Bob Scott, Sr.

Talk compared old methods with the new advances in turf management.

Search for progress endless.

Much credit due experimental stations.

If drainage is good, roots are deep, and the grass plant has a pleasing appearance as to density and texture.

Good soil composition is necessary for the above.

Plug identification: Grau, Harper, Fitts and Rabbitt

An evaluation of grasses as to their merits.

Fundamentals of turf management : H.B. Musser

Trips over the country show that all regions have the same problems basically.

The same basic methods of management more or less apply to all.

Location, climate, soil, altitude, use, type etc. can cause a variation in how the basic problems are handled.

Management is application of basic principle to work at hand.

Too much fertilizer encourages large brown patch - too little can be a factor in the development of dollar spot.

The best policy is not to go to extremes in either direction, keep to the middle of the road.

From 8-10 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. is about right for bent greens.

Kind of fertilizer not important, but method and time of application is.

MANAGEMENT

Man is needed for management

MEN, tools and equipment he needs in order to secure results.

Men must be efficiently trained in their jobs, if not, the management program fails.

Tools must be plentiful and must be kept at a high precision level or results will not be good.

We must continue to improve ourselves and our courses. Golfers won't let us go backward. Think perfection and strive for it.

Consider soil bacteria first - grass second. Bacteria must eat before the grass can. Work from roots up.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR EACH OTHER

By Tom Dawson, Jr.
Supt., Country Club of Virginia

When a country club employs their three executives, which are the manager, golf professional and golf course superintendent, they expect complete harmony, and only with complete harmony will the club and these three men grow.

My first thought, as a superintendent, is "What can I do to please my green's chairman, the manager and the golf professional", for regardless of what you think, a great deal of your success at a club depends on these three men.

Following are a few suggestions:

1. Give them a good, attractive, well-manicured golf course, so more members will want to come out. More members out will naturally increase food and beverage sales and also increase " pro shop " sales and stimulate more golf lessons.
2. Cooperate with the green's chairman, the manager and the golf professional in every way possible.
3. If a new manager or golf professional comes to the job, give him a tour of the golf course and help him get located and acquainted.
4. Encourage them to give you suggestions and take an interest in your work.
5. If new construction is planned, ask the golf professional for his assistance.
6. Suggest to your golf committee that the golf professional sit in at your meetings.
7. If you are going to top-dress or aerify the greens, tell the golf professional in plenty of time. Explain to him why you are doing this work, so that he may understand and be able to explain to the members.
8. Always be cheerful, have a good appearance, be neat and clean.
9. Praise your manager and golf professional. If you can not, be silent.

A good superintendent should always have an open mind and encourage constructive suggestions from the president of the club down to the caddies. A good superintendent should always be willing to share his knowledge and experience with his fellow-workers, or anyone interested in better turf.

Editor's Note:- Tom was scheduled to be on a panel at the Baltimore Meeting but it was cancelled at the last minute. We persuaded him to let us publish his notes in this "NEWSLETTER".

COURSE CLOSED

" Golf in frosty weather " or " Course closed until further notice " brings to mind two articles that appeared in the USGA Journal and Turf Management of April, 1951. The intermittent freezing and thawing of the past few weeks suggests that a brief review of the narratives would be quite timely at the moment.

Every golf club has its die-hard who brave frozen fingers and frozen greens to attempt to play under Artic conditions, when the course should be closed. Frost itself does not cause any appreciable damage to turf and, indeed, most greenskeepers would welcome a period of frost to give the course a rest.

Playing on frozen greens, however, will cause damage, particularly when the surface has thawed and the underlying soil is frozen. Plant tissues are bruised readily during frost, and a distinct browning effect can be observed when the thaw takes place. Footmarks can often be observed after play on frozen turf and these may persist for many weeks. There may be root damage as well. This is more likely when there is a sudden rush of golfers as soon as the thaw commences. Root damage may be caused as a result of a shearing action- the golfer's feet pushing the moist unfrozen surface across the frozen sub-surface. Also, the surface of greens may be disturbed badly by the players' feet.

Now let's be sensible and try to convince the fair-minded golfers why the course should be closed. The majority of members have no desire whatsoever to injure the course unnecessarily and particularly injure the greens. So, we begin by telling them walking on wet, soggy turf causes compaction of the soil and playing balls to soft wet greens tears the sod and leaves bad scars and bumpy greens. They understand the scar business alright and also the bumpy putting, but an explanation of compaction and the effect it has on good turf is harder to explain.

How does golf affect the ideal playing conditions? It is very easy to explain. The foot traffic of players over a small area such as a putting green or tee develops surface compaction, especially when the soil is saturated. A compacted crust develops which prevents the easy flow of water and food and air into the lower soil regions where plant roots normally grow. Plant roots do not grow in soils where the natural channels and voids have been destroyed by the compressing and crushing action of foot traffic on soils which are too wet. Where there is no air there are no plant roots and thus there can be no turf.

The simple truth is that compaction and good golf turf just don't go together. The course is closed temporarily so the players can be assured of good playing conditions for the rest of the season. If the course is not closed under such unfavorable conditions, the greens may be injured to the point where it will be impossible to provide good playing conditions for the remainder of the playing season. Thus, the wishes of a few may interfere with the pleasurable golf of the many later on.

The golfer pays the bill, but no one but the golfer pays the price when a few permit their selfishness to interfere with the established processes of nature and the rights of others.

NOTE: The above is an abstract from two articles that appeared in the USGA Journal and Turf Management, April, 1951.

CHANGES IN GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT IN LAST 25 YEARS

by Bob Scott, Sr.

The search for the perfect or near perfect grasses for tees, greens, fairways and roughs on our golf courses is an endless one. More has been accomplished during the past twenty-five years than at any other period to my way of thinking, mostly because of the research by the various experimental stations, the observations of the golf course superintendents, and the bringing together from all over the world seeds and turf by our agronomists. The cross breeding and producing of hybrids suitable for the various playing areas under different climatic conditions of this great country. While some are still in the testing stage, others have proved themselves beyond a doubt and are producing a turf which seemed impossible twenty-five years ago. Up until a little before that time, research and experimental work was more or less in its infancy. There were no meetings such as this with Kodachromes, etc. to show results or outdoor meetings to get the feel of the turf under our feet and discuss the good and bad points of each variety. The close cooperation of the Green Section of the USGA, the State colleges and Department of Agriculture, the agronomists and the golf course superintendents have and still are doing wonders in producing turf suitable not only for golf courses, but for other areas where good turf is not only desirable, but necessary. How well I remember my first experience with stolons. Of course that was well over thirty years ago. We were building a new green at our Roland Park course. I had always used seed while working for a golf course construction firm; fescue and red top for sandy seaside courses, south german mixed bent plus red top for inland courses - on the greens. I had heard about the stolon method used by Lyman Carrier in Washington who was testing strains of creeping bent sent to him from all over the country for the U.S.G.A. I paid him a visit and he gave me seven varieties of stolons - about 3/4 of a bushel of each. We chopped them up and after mixing them, started to spread them over the green. We could see the cover was going to be rather thin, so I got some red top, fescue and south german bent and sowed that along with the stolons. As time went by, one of the strains of stolon type predominated, eventually crowding out everything else - proving a case of the survival of the fittest. It has already been proven that most of the older types of bent can be crowded out by new and better varieties using the plugging method or sprigging into aerifier holes.

The selection of a strain of grass is something for the superintendent to decide. He has quite a selection from which to choose.

There are very few of the golfers of today who remember that up until about twenty-five years ago, it was customary to play temporary greens during the winter months because of the belief it would ruin the turf. Better

grasses and better turf management have made it possible to discontinue that practice.

At the recent St. Louis Conference, one of the speakers suggested that those here, in what is now called the Twilight Zone, perform marriages between the grasses of the North and South which would produce hybrids that would fit into our picture and give us good turf all the year round.

(Editor's Note: Bob Scott's topic will be continued in the next issue.)

FROM THE MAIL BAG

(A visitor writes his impressions of our Baltimore Turfgrass Conference)

" I have just received your letter and appreciate so much your writing me. I am chagrined, however, that so much time has been allowed to pass before writing to confirm what I had pleasure in saying to you at Baltimore.

As you know, we made our bow to the turfgrass world only this last season. So that this winter has brought the initial opportunities for us to attend turf conferences, something we have always desired to do in order to learn how better to prepare ourselves for an ever-improving service.

The Turfgrass Conference of your Association at Baltimore has thus been the first I have been enabled to attend, and it was found a heart-warming experience, indeed. In the past, I have attended many similar sessions in the industrial world, but yours contained, at least so far as my experience is concerned, an ingredient never before encountered.

Yours was conceived with the obvious intent of bringing technical light effectively to bear upon the more important problems with which your membership must have had to contend during the past year. So far as I could perceive, this intent was successfully realized-- certainly as to the major topics, through the splendid treatment given them by Drs. Musser, Moer, and Harper.

But the rare ingredient I have mentioned, which struck me so forcefully and so happily, and which it seems to me, made the conference more than any other was of the spirit.

Though I had the opportunity to meet only a relative few of your fellow superintendents, I sensed what I am sure exists in all -- a spirit genuine and out-going, without reservation and lacking any personal axes to grind, one of true good-will, of fellowship and eagerness helpfully to share, of mutual respect and serious commitment to the common chosen profession. And withal, the ability to manifest all this unobtrusively and with the light touch.

It was a privilege to have been there and to have been able to say these things to you.

Mrs. Pleasonton and I want you all to know how deeply we are appreciative of the cordiality extended to us. Especially did we appreciate the deft way

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in which the embarrassment of her being the only woman there was erased. We only hope, however, that by this you were not deprived of any of the fun you might otherwise have had.

In fullest reciprocation of the spirit you manifested to us, I am

Sincerely,
Eugene S. Pleasonton
Valentine Turfgrass Nursery
Worton, Maryland

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at Ft. Belvoir Officers' Golf Club, Ft. Belvoir, Virginia on March 8 with M/Sgt. Tom Fullerton as host superintendent.

Place: Ft. Belvoir, Va.
Date : March 8, 1955
Time: Golf 12 noon, weather permitting
Social Period 5:00 p.m.
Dinner 6:00 p.m.
Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Sgt. Fullerton and his greens chairman Col. A.E. Makholm want a good Constructive Suggestion Report on the golf course so be sure to walk around over the course even though you don't play golf and join in the discussions at the meeting.

In compliance with the rules of the club, all who use the dining room must wear ties. You must wear a tie for this occasion.

LATE FLASH

Baltimore Country Club has announced the name of the man who has been selected to take Bob Scott's place as superintendent at the Roland Park and Five Farms courses. His name is Leroy McIlhenney and he comes from Toledo, Ohio. We have extended an invitation to him to meet with us at Ft. Belvoir where we will try to make him welcome.

COMING EVENTS

The National Capital Flower and Garden Show will be held at the National Guard Armory in Washington March 10 thru 16. If you like flowers and growing plants, don't miss this colorful event. You won't regret it.

Admission at the gate will be \$1.25, but advance sale tickets can be purchased from the Professional Gardeners Association for \$.85. Professional Gardeners who are members of the Mid-Atlantic and have tickets for sale are: Hugh McRae, Dick Watson, Wayne Jerome, Brownie, George and Frank, the Holmeads, Disney and Kidwell, Bob Shields and Ruben Hines.