

Grass Seeds in a Nutshell

By CHARLES C. CHANDERLIN

THE information contained in this article is written with the idea of setting forth in as precise a manner as possible a brief history of various grass seeds, and their general usefulness in the construction and maintenance of golf course turf. To be sure, many books have been written on the subject of Grass, but the majority are of a rather technical nature, so as to be of very little aid to the greens superintendent. In discussing the various grass seeds, we have constantly borne in mind the fact that this article has not been prepared for professional seedsmen, but greens superintendents.

It is the sincere hope of the writer that this information will meet the demands of the busy greens superintendents, and that it will be of some benefit.

South German Bent

This is an ideal grass for Putting Greens. German Mixed Bent seed, which is commonly used, comes from a small section in the southern part of Germany. Until recent years the seed has been threshed by hand, at which time the purities were not very high. Recently however, a more up-to-date method has been employed and it is now possible after rigidly recleaning the seed to obtain a purity as high as 90%. This at the same time reduces the weed seeds to a minimum, range of which is .03 of 1 per cent to 1 per cent. This seed was sold by seedsmen throughout the country as Creeping Bent seed until the Green Section pointed out the fact to seedsmen that this was a misnomer, the percentage of actual Creeping Bent seed contained in South German Bent being practically nil; only a small trace in each lot. Mixed South German Bent Seed contains several strains of Bent, as a rule Rhode Island or Colonial Bent, and Velvet Bent.

It is used in the eastern part of the United States, north of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers, and on the Northwest coast. It should be sown alone for best results. However, where a club wishes to economize, a mixture of 50 per cent Redtop and 50 per cent Mixed German Bent may be used, or a mixture of 75 per cent South German Bent and 25 per cent Redtop, for Putting Greens.

For quite a few years after the war, the price of South German Mixed Bent ruled unusually high. Recently however, price has been materially reduced and this item can now be purchased at low prices considering the general use of this seed. Like all grasses in the *Agrostis* family, this seed is a lover of moisture and thrives best in lowlands, and where it is possible to supply an abundance of moisture. Although it prefers moisture, it also has done very well on dry or sandy soil.

Rhode Island or Colonial Bent

Rhode Island Bent is an abundant grass on well drained soils and is found principally in New England. Wherever it is possible to obtain the true variety, it produces as fine a Putting Green as any of the Bents. Recently, in the vicinity of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, they have taken up the growing of Rhode Island Bent, which is known under the name of Prince Edward Island Bent seed. The seed is grown comparatively free of weeds, and it is quite creditable to the growers of this seed how wonderfully well they are producing a seed which has a purity of 95 per cent, and a germination of 90 per cent or better. It will pay the members of the National Association to look further into the use of this seed and make inquiry of the U. S. G. A.

Kentucky Bluegrass

Kentucky Bluegrass seed is produced in Kentucky and Missouri, the best seed however in recent years, has been produced in Missouri. The seed harvested in Missouri is heavier, freer of chaff, and cleaner of weed seeds than the seed grown in Kentucky. Quality of Bluegrass seed is determined by the weight per bushel as well as the purity and freeness from weed seeds. When mixed with Redtop, there is no better fairway seed than Kentucky Bluegrass. For instance a mixture of 65 per cent Kentucky Bluegrass and 35 per cent Redtop, or 80 per cent Kentucky Bluegrass and 20 per cent Redtop. Bluegrass is a limestone lover, but thrives exceptionally well on other soils. For fairways, Bluegrass has pretty well demonstrated its usefulness, and there is not another grass we could name that is better adapted for this purpose.

Red Top

Probably no grass seed has a greater range of uses than Red Top. This seed is produced in large quantities in Illinois. It has been known to produce excellent results under all sorts of climatic conditions and soils. Red Top must at all times be closely mowed, or else it has a tendency to develop coarse and thick blades. However, if it is kept closely cut, coarse blades will not have a chance to develop.

There is no grass that we know of which can be used to more advantage on golf courses. For instance, sometimes a green becomes a little worn looking from considerable hard usage, and Red Top can be used for quick results in a top dressing along with Bent seed. It also serves as a fairway grass and as a matter of fact an all around grass.

(Note: Mr. Chanderlin has been in charge of the golf grass seed department of the Philadelphia Seed Company for a number of years.)

(Continued in September issue)