

NEW TURF DISEASE

Sclerotinia nomeocarpa, Fusarium nivale,
Rhizoctonia solani,
"Inflation"

By Dale Achondo, Superintendent of Golf, City of Sacramento, California

The Golf Course Superintendent with his knowledge and arsenal of chemicals for the most part, has been able to grow superior turf, many times with varieties of grass and under conditions where having any turf at all is a miracle. He has fought diseases, noxious grass and Mother Nature herself in a continuing battle to give his members and patrons beautiful green belts to enjoy their leisure time. Now the new turf disease strikes, and in searching our library, we can find no "application rate" for cure! The disease - INFLATION (money or lack of it).

Our patrons ask why don't you mow the greens on Sunday?, when are we getting the new green you described at the last meeting?, are you going to start the new practice putting green soon? All these questions are legitimate, and the only answer we have is the new disease got us first.

Briefly here are some causes for this disease. In 1964-65, our budget was \$464,000 and in 1974-75, \$788,000 due primarily to the increase in employee salaries and benefits and the cost of chemicals and equipment.

Amonia sulphate in 1966 cost us \$63 a ton; today it's \$190 a ton. A well-known greens fertilizer sold for \$70 a ton in 1966; now it's \$199. Urea sold for \$78 a ton in 1969; now it's \$249.

The greenskeeper on our courses in 1964 were earning \$480 a month; today they make \$874 plus approximately 25% in benefits.

How about a Tri-plex Tee Mower in 1964 going for \$1,400; today \$2,500.

In many cases, this years budgets were submitted prior to the big inflationary spiral, which has made us manage a shoestring operation at most.

Do we give up this battle? No, we must meet it as we do the other problems. We have to be better managers; we will be aware of unit costs for our projects, but most of all, we must make members aware that if dues and fees are to remain reasonable, some projects and programs may have to be shelved for awhile.

One thing we have on our side -- everyone is aware of the disease, and so it might make the budget process just a little easier.
