

PURDUE ANNUAL TURF CONFERENCE SUMMARIZED

At the annual Purdue turf conference March 3-5, Dr. N. J. Volk, associate director of the Indiana experiment station, opened the meeting with a brief, historical rundown. Formerly speakers at the Purdue meet used to draw heavily on experiences from attendees, Dr. Volk told. Now the regional turf program is great enough so that the conference has some research facts to offer attendees.

J. Porter Henry, green chairman of the Algonquin Golf Club, St. Louis, next gave a humorous account of troubles experienced by all golf club green chairmen. They should not be thin skinned, nor be appeasers nor be "yes men," Henry said. Also, you have to satisfy both the professional and the 100-shooter. A green chairman should have a broad knowledge of technical problems confronting greenkeepers. Such knowledge enables greenkeepers to outline problems of cost and construction requirements to other club members tactfully.

Henry Gilbert, landscape architect on the Purdue horticulture staff, told the golf course superintendents, cemetery managers, commercial dealers and other turf workers how to care for shrubs. He advised them to space shrubs in natural, informal settings, except for foundation plantings. Shrubs should be spaced three-fourths of their optimum spread for most pleasing results.

Rejuvenating old shrubs came in for mention too, with how to make shrubs bloom, their pruning and mulching. Gilbert showed slides of all types of shrubs and their arrangement.

Noer Talks

Dr. O. J. Noer, agronomist with the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, showed slides of turf trouble areas on golf courses from Washington, D. C. to Washington state, from Miami to Montana. He illustrated the value of puncturing compacted greens and fairways in order to improve grass. Some of Dr. Noer's slides showed the performance of various grasses for different purposes.

Discussed also were fertilizers and their application on fairways, greens and their use in combination with weedicides. Dr. Noer also talked about turf drainage problems.

Eric G. Sharvelle, plant pathologist at Purdue, told the turf conferees about his summer trip to Ireland and England. With slides he illustrated the tour, including the site of the 1951 British Open (in Ireland).

Tree manicuring came in for discussion by Carl Fenner, city forester at Lansing, Michigan. He began with tree planting and care, discouraging the planting of walnut and most other nut trees. They are too susceptible to damage by insects and diseases, Fenner believes.

The forester outlined how to repair mechanical tree injuries, how to avoid environmental troubles, how to spray for tree insects, how to remove dead trees and how to prune them in his slide-illustrated talk.

Stan Graves, golf course superintendent at Westwood Country Club, Cleveland, traced the installation of his new water system from plans to final placement. It is important to choose a contractor with high grade equipment; to select suitable pipe and fixtures by a reliable manufacturer; and to lay the pipe—once construction has begun—right up to where the trencher quit for the night in order to avoid caveins of soil during and following rains.

Helping Graves during the question and answer period that followed was Porter Dix of the Johns-Manville Company.

Dealer Traces History of Materials

Paul Burdett, commercial dealer in turf materials, traced the swing over the past 7 years from old to new materials. He stressed that the rate, the concentration, the amount of rainfall, the relative humidity, the growth stage of the grass, the type of season, the method of application or machine used—all affect how a turf material responds on grass.

Dr. C. M. Harrison, head of the Department of Farm Crops at Michigan State College, informed his listeners about the requirements of grass and its culture. Also, he stressed the importance of planting species and varieties which are adapted to given conditions and for particular uses. Dr. Harrison cited experimental data which suggests that the ryegrasses and red top severely retarded the growth and development of bluegrass and red fescue when grown in combination with these species. He recommended reduced seeding rates and more careful attention to seedbed preparation, fertility requirements and time of planting grass seed.

Harold Bohling, nurseryman and landscaper at Munster, Indiana, told how his firm establishes lawns on various types of areas and on areas of varying size. He recommended simplifying operations so that power machinery could be used to a maximum.

Carol Lawrence, landscape architect with Upjohn Laboratories, Kalamazoo, Michigan, traced establishing large lawn-playground areas from the time the company decentralized from the city to when the new building and playground facilities were established. By slides, Miss Lawrence showed grass that was growing beautifully on a 1,600 acre tract on what she said was originally poor soil.

City United in Turf Improvement.

Robert Duke, landscape architect with Western Electric in Indianapolis, Indiana, began his turf talk on the Indianapolis Yard-Parks Program with how city citizenry began their local beautifying campaign. After being branded a dirty city by John Gunther a few years ago, an Indianapolis newspaper, botany groups, turf specialists, fairs and the city Hobby Show were welded into a home and factory, yard-beautifying program. Contests of various kinds and a 6-weeks high school course taught by seven Indianapolis high schools have heightened interest in the landscape improvement program.

In a sectional meeting this time, Eric G. Sharvelle gave his group up to date findings on turf disease control as it is found today in Ireland and England. He believes that feeding a fungicide to grass—a "systemic" fungicide—has definite possibilities. Sharvelle conferred with an English fungicide manufacturer who is experimenting with the method.

Other speakers in this panel were Dr. Charles Wilson, extensionist with the Green Section, U. S. Golf Association; Dr. John Vaughn, Michigan State College plant pathologist who helped test Acti-dione, a turf antibiotic; and William Klomprens, graduate assistant in plant pathology at the same college. While Acti-dione has been effective in controlling melting out disease, it is not available commercially as yet.

Dr. Wilson said that there is no substitute for good turf management in helping to control disease. Fertility levels, water management and drainage, aeration both above and below standing turf, mechanical damage and compaction, the degree of mat formation—all these affect the ability of proved fungicides to prevent or cure infected turf. He listed the fungicides and combinations that helped or cured various conditions in the 1951 National Cooperative Turf Fungicide Trials.