

## CHRIST, AM I CONFUSED

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Please! The title to this article is a prayer to the Almighty for help and not to be taken lightly as just a catchy title. There are many reasons for confusion. They are, to name a few, topsoil, topdressing, verticut, aerifying water, strains of bent, fungicides, arsenate of lead, power mowers, and on and on.

Volumes have been written about what mixture of sand, soil and humus to use under a green. There is no answer and I'll prove it. Our nursery is on an abandoned polo field with no tile or sand or humus. It has Pennlu and C-7 Bent in it, is cut when the greens are cut, watered when we happen to remember it, never treated with fungicides and it is the best Bent we have today. Our test green (no traffic) had everything built into it—sand, humus material, and is watched like a hawk, and it is lousy except the C-1 and C-7. The Bents are Pennlu, C-1 and C-7, C-19, C-52. Why? That's why I'm confused.

**TOPDRESSING.** I believe in it. Always have and do it twice early spring and fall. There are greens that haven't been topdressed for years—some are good and some are not. There must be a reason for the difference. What it is I don't know, I'm confused.

Verticut or rake or brush or comb, or what have you. We are told we have to do some of it. I do some of it. I do and think it is helpful. I wouldn't do any of these operations after June 1st in Cincinnati for all the tea in China. It would be (or would it?) fatal. I am confused but only slightly on this subject—I will not do any bruising of Bent during June, July or August.

Aerification has become a "must" in most greens maintenance programs. It helps, it's not new, and has been done for as many years as I can remember. It can be done any time and will not disturb the putting qualities of a green—NUTS! Any time a hole is poked, punched, torn or drilled into a fine putting green it does disturb the putting quality, either actually or as a mental hazard to the golfer. In the spring or fall when the Bent is vigorous it can be done on Monday and very well hidden by Wednesday. That would be impossible here now. It would leave a hole for days because what little growth we get now on Bent is vertical, not lateral—and darned little of either. If a green is going to die anyway some aerification might be helpful. I guess it is—"guess" I said. I'm confused. Look at greenskeeping from the golfer's point of view as to aerification. He doesn't know that a green is getting sick like a greenskeeper does in advance, so all he sees is holes in his pretty putting greens. Talk all you want—two people will then be confused, you and the golfer.

Water is great stuff. It causes trouble with Bourbon or Scotch, causes trouble if applied in too large quantities on grass or too little or too late. I would say offhand that of the three named the worst mistake is too much; second, too late. Too little can be corrected if not too late if you haven't earlier used too much. Now you are confused. I am too. The temperature right now is 98 degrees and humidity 62%—well, would you water?—with sprinklers, by hand, morning, evening and how long in either case? Now we are both confused again. Where can you get the answer? There is no where and I mean "nowhere." The correct answer is do something about it and trust to the Lord that you are right.

What strain of Bent do you have? Is it good now? Better keep it. Is it not good? Well, get all new greens.

They cost only about \$500.00 each. The club will not care if you spend \$9,000.00 for greens that are never going to cause trouble from wilt, leaf spot, dollar patch, brown patch, but, boy oh boy, when you ask for the \$9,000.00 bucks you better know you have a Bent that will take it and how. I have a pet strain—it is good—I say so. One of my friends—Likes by name—says I'm nuts. He has his pet strain and says it is best. You know what, we are both wrong. There is no best. There are just better and worse Bents. Now, which ones they are I don't know and neither does anyone else. I'll prove that also. Within the last four weeks I've read or heard experts designate three best Bents for our area. How do they know? They don't. They have never kept greens in this area and I hope they never have to do so. I'm confused.

If you haven't gone off the deep end yet, just hold on. Fungicides and insecticides and herbicides. Why! Oh! Why! don't the U. S. G. A. put on a drive to get all producers of these products to make the actual content the same percentage? It is confusing enough to decide which one to use for what without having to convert each into a trigonometry problem before application. They run from 1% to 99% pure stuff—so I'm confused. Do you know why arsenate of lead is now pink? It is because the poor stuff has been kicked around so many years that it got grey and had to have a henna rinse. Honestly, I'm confused. It will stop Poa and Crab. It won't. It kills orchards. That wasn't what did it. It stops root growth—well does it? Who knows I have used it for 27 years with both good and bad results. There is one sure thing about it, if you eat some you won't care long what happens. That, everyone is sure about.

Don't leave me—only one more—Power Mowers. Nice, weren't they, the first or second year. Not so good now. The vibration of the engine plus extra weight compacts the soil. They do, too! BUT! where can you buy a hand putting green mower? It can't be did! Who would push it if you could buy it? I'm confused. I'm not really too confused on this though. If I had my "druthers" I'd use power mowers for the first dozen mowings in early spring—then good old hand mowers the rest of the season. It would be cheaper when all factors were considered, and, by gosh, on Saturday, Sunday and holidays the hand mower would run (providing the man showed up for work to push it). Power mowers do not always run when you are in a hurry.

To close, I may seem bitter or cynical. I'm not. I may seem to be poking fun at Drs. Noer, Daniels, Musser, Wilson, Grau and others. I most certainly am not. I holler for them like a stuck pig when I need their help. The ones named and many more I consider my closest friends and they are the people who keep us confused with new ideas, chemicals, grasses, machines, ways and means for the development of better turf. Damn, now I am confused.

Thank you, Lord, for the months of September and October.

—THE GREEN BREEZE

O. J. Noer celebrated his 65th birthday on Tuesday, September 27. Several of the Midwest superintendents had planned to surprise him with a visit on that day, but O. J. was busy leaving on a trip up into Canada somewhere, so they called off the trip. However, we want in behalf of all the members of the Midwest to congratulate O. J. and to wish him the best of luck and hope we can do the same on many more birthdays.