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#### Mid-Atlantic Newsletter

#### PEAT MOSS

Doing any landscaping this fall? If so you probably will be purchasing some peat moss. Suffice to say peat moss is available in different forms commonly called humus; but how often do we specify a particular kind of peat? Before you place this fall's order take time to evaluate what is available as compared to your special golf course needs.

The peats are desirable forms of organic matter. The best ones are the residues of marsh plants which have been preserved under water. The type of decomposition to which they have been subjected leaves them in a form that is highly resistant to further decay. As a result their beneficial effects on the soil extend over comparatively long periods.

Peats vary considerably in structure, stage of decomposition, capacity to absorb water, and organic-matter content. The moisture-absorptive capacity and organic-matter content are the most important items from the standpoint of effects upon physical soil properties. Peat should absorb four to five times its dry weight of water, and the organic-matter content should be 90% or more by weight on a dry-matter basis.

Commercial peats can be grouped into four main classes: 1) Raw Peats, 2) Cultivated Peats, 3) Moss Peats, and 4) Sedimentary Peats.

Raw peat is the material just as it comes from the bed, which has been processed by drying, shredding or pulverizing, and screening. Cultivated peat is raw peat that has been tilled to break it up mechanically and to quicken the rate of decay. Cultivation stimulates the development of organisms responsible for decomposition. In peat of this type some of the more readily decomposable materials have been lost and

the residue is more resistant to further breakdown. The commercial material is in excellent physical condition for thorough mixing into the soil. Its commercial value depends upon its moisture content, its capacity to absorb water, and the amount of actual organic matter which it contains.

The moss peat is composed principally of sphagnum mosses which have undergone partial decay. It is finely fibrous and very light and fluffy. Unless well pulverized, it is in poor condition for mixing into soils. Because of its higher rate of decomposition and its extremely light spongy character it is not so suitable a soil conditioner for turf use as the raw and cultivated peats.

The sedimentary peats have little value for soil conditioning. They are composed of high percentages of very fine particles of organic matter mixed with silt and clay, which have been deposited in shallow lakes and ponds. They are often sticky and plastic when wet and highly compact and hard when dry.

Rotted manure, spent mushroom soil, charcoal, sawdust, buckwheat hulls, fused cinder, peanut hulls, and by-products like tannery sludge, sewage sludge, ground cocoa shells, and similar materials which may be available locally can be used as supplementary sources of organic matter. Their general character and rates of decay must be considered in estimating their value. For a material to be considered of value of organic matter it must contain porosity and a high degree of stability. Manures, for example, consist of 70-80% moisture and 20-30% dry matter. They decay rapidly and within a comparatively short time only about 2-3% of the original weight of material remains in the soil as humus. In the preparation of topdressing material, mushroom soil is valuable for use as the soil portion of the mixture, but does not supply sufficient humus to justify its use to increase solid organic matter permanently. Most of the other organic by-product materials, such as sewage and tannery sludges, are of the same general character as manure. They break down rapidly and leave relatively little humus for permanent improvement.

Attempts to use various by-products hulls such as cocoa shells and hulls from rice, peanuts, and buckwheat as soil conditioners have not been very satisfactory, unless they have been composted first. These materials are light and fluffy and are difficult to mix into the soil uniformly.

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## M. A. G. C. S. MONTHLY MEETINGS 1974

- 2 November, 1974 — FALL DINNER DANCE  
Host: Dudley Smith  
Silver Lake Country Club  
147th St. & 82nd Ave., Orland Park, Ill.
- 7 November, 1974 — Annual Meeting will be held at  
River Forest Country Club.  
Ed Stewart, Superintendent, will be our host.
- 3 December, 1974 — Host: John Jackman  
Medinah Country Club (Fall Clinic)  
Medinah, Ill.

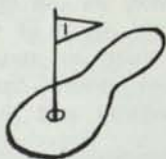
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## A PARABLE

The following was from the September issue of **Agricultural Chemicals News and Reports**, University of California:

One upon a time there was a man of good will named Goodwyn Goodwill whose only desire was to leave the world a better place for his passing through it. And he was happy.

He had a happy wife and three happy children and they lived in a happy house with a happy dog and a happy cat. And they had a lovely garden.

Then one day Goodwill took up the study of ecology—ecology having suddenly become quite the rage.

The first thing he read was that pesticides were leaching from the soil to poison the waters of the ocean. "I can't poison the waters of the ocean," he said. So he renounced pesticides and let the snails take over the garden.

The next thing he read was that the smoke and fumes he produced were befouling the crystalline air. "I can't befoul the crystalline air," he said. So he gave up smoking, driving the family car, and fires in the fireplace.

Then he read that overgrazing by livestock was causing serious soil erosion. "I can't erode the soil of my planet," he said. So he gave up eating meat and wearing leather products, going barefoot summer and winter.

Goodwill felt he was now at least holding his own until he read that he, personally, required more than seven tons of fuel each year to warm, transport and illuminate himself. And he was thus destroying at a prodigious rate irreplaceable reserves of coal and oil that nature had taken eons to create.

"Good Heavens!" he cried dazedly. And he turned off the furnace, doused the lights and gave up riding the bus.

In his cold, dark house he could now read only in the daytime. This was fortunate because it was a full week before he stumbled across still another staggering statistic: He, personally required no less than five tons of food, minerals and forest products each and every year to maintain himself in a civilized state.

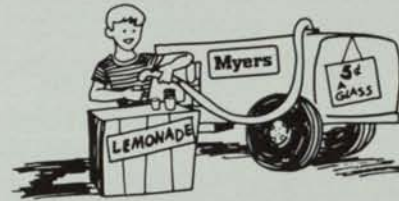
Worse yet, he threw away annually, all by himself, one ton of beer cans, pop bottles, milk cartons and other empty containers that now littered a once pristine America.

### SURPLUS EQUIPMENT SALE

- 1—TORO 7 blade SPARTAN Mower, 16" steel wheels, center bed-knife adjustment, not used \$200.00
- 6—TORO SUPER PRO Mower units, 4 right, 2 left, not used, 5 blade reels, each \$100.00
- 1—TORO SUPER PRO 3 to 5 unit conversion kit, 6 blade reels for 1969-1970 Models, not used, original carton \$250.00
- 12—TORO SPARTAN 14" steel wheels, used, each \$7.50
- 6—TORO SPARTAN 8 blade reels, not used, each \$65.00
- 1—TORO Riding Sulky for 31" Whirlwind, not used \$30.00
- 2—TORO SPARTANS, 6 blade, pneumatic wheels, used 2 years, each \$150.00
- 2—TORO 81" Super Professionals, used, with dual wheels, 6 blade reels, "AS IS", \$200.00 each.

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To save on food, a panicky Goodwill went on a strict diet, eating nothing but dandelion greens and boiled thistles.

To save on minerals, he eschewed tinfoil, ballpoint pens and loose change. And to preserve the forests, he swore never to read anything printed on paper again.

That was good, because a full month passed before Goodwill heard on his neighbor's radio a scientist explaining how each of us breathes in life-giving oxygen and breathes out poisonous carbon dioxide.

It was then that the awful truth hit him: "On this overcrowded planet," he said to himself, "the only way a man can stop doing harm to the ecology is to drop dead."

So he gave up breathing.

His last wish was to take up as little space as possible in death. Thus, he was cremated and his ashes scattered. Most of his remains therefore became smog. And his ashes, containing ten parts per million of indestructible DDT, washed down to the poisoned sea.

**MORAL:** As you go through life, don't worry about doing the most possible good; just worry about doing the least possible harm.

—A parable by Arthur Hoppe, San Francisco Examiner.

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