

Golf courses best for environment

'I believe a blade of grass is no less than the journeywork of the stars.'

— Walt Whitman

With apology to the famed poet and esthetic values aside, there's also the shine of dollar signs in those green shoots.

A 1969 study rated turfgrass a \$25 billion-plus per-year industry in the United States. It was estimated that more than 500,000 people made their living directly from the care and maintenance of turf in this country.

What must those figures now be?

Dr. Eliot C. and Beverly C. Roberts of The Lawn Institute in Pleasant Hill, Tenn., have compiled a fact-laden booklet, "Lawn and Sports Turf Benefits," that explores several turf-related areas.

Golf courses command a strong share of the focus of the 31-page book which has gone into its fourth printing and, according to Ms. Roberts, has been sent by the American Sod Producers Association to its members, to all Iowa legislators by several groups, and by the New Jersey and Florida Lawn Care associations and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America to their members.

"We found that there were a lot of books written about turfgrass but each would have one sentence about its benefits," said Ms. Roberts. "We had fun putting it together and the response has been terrific."

She said she even received a request for the book from a Western Australia organization that wants to start a sod farm and is meeting resistance with environmental groups.

Extracted from the book are these choice paragraphs:

- "Golf long has been the favorite game on turf. The game dates to the 1400s when the Dutch practiced a combination of winter hockey and summer golf. By 1414, St. Andrew's of Scotland had become a public golf course and still is public.

- "Golf is played by millions of people worldwide as a means for exercise, relaxation, and as an avenue for business transactions.

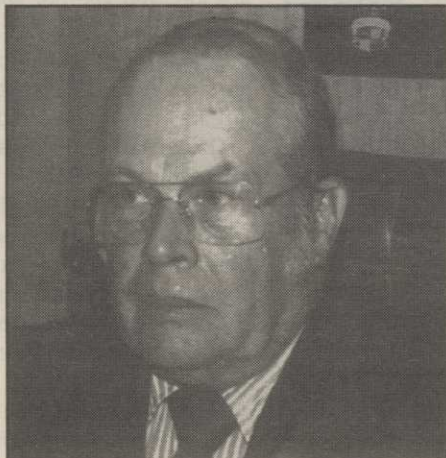
- "The first U.S. golf course was built before 1890. Today an estimated 23.4 million play 500 million rounds of golf a year in the U.S. By the year 2000, it is expected there will be 40 million golfers."

(The estimated 14,000 golf courses are expected to spend \$4 billion a year to maintain their facilities.)

- "Golf courses influence the tax base of the community. The properties surrounding a course reflect higher appraised values. The game of golf is second only to 'United Way' in raising funds for charity in Westchester County in New York, where about \$2.5 million is raised each year through golf for philanthropies.

- "Golf turfgrass in the U.S. protects 2 million acres against soil erosion. Numerous golf courses have been built on old waste landfills, changing unproductive regions into useful sites and undesirable locations into desirable ones. This is direct land conservation plus conserving topsoil by grassing highly erodible land with turfgrass.

- "A high-quality turf will buffer loss of nutrients in runoff water or in the leachate. When effluent water is used on turf, the water is cleaned. This is a tremendous benefit



Dr. Eliot Roberts

to our environment.

- "Ten percent of U.S. golf courses are using effluent wastewater for turfgrass irrigation. This reclaimed water by law can not be returned to most municipal water supplies, nor released into streams, lakes or oceans. Turfgrass, therefore, helps recycle this water.

- "Ground-water recharge is an important benefit of turf. An acre left in open space provides an average of 600,000 gallons of recharge per year.

- "An average golf course has 150 acres. In the Northeast, this area will recharge the water table with a net of 90 million gallons of rainwater and snowmelt a year, allowing for evaporation and transpiration. Consumption of water by a golf course in this same area would be about 9 million gallons.

- "In the U.S., turf is probably the most widely grown, talked about and least appreciated commodity.

- "When decisions must be made about use of water, fertilizer or pesticides on lawns, there often have been only limited objective comparisons made of benefits of turf in relation to cost or possible risk. At times, because of this lack of information on lawn and sports turf benefits, lawns have been allowed to perish only to be replaced by inert or artificial surfaces that are definitely



Beverly Roberts

hazardous to our health."

A few more grass clippings:

- "Some feel that a person who keeps the lawn perfectly trimmed is a person who can be trusted.

- "Many states depend on tourism as an important part of their economy. The U.S. Department of Commerce predicts it will be the number-one industry in America by the year 2000. To encourage tourists, landscape at rest stops, scenic overlooks and roadsides is improved each year so that people will have pleasant places to relax, walk around and picnic while traveling.

- "Grasses and people get on truly good together. Lawns help reduce some causes of allergies.

- "Turf along airstrips reduces and prolongs engine life of planes. The first U.S. airport, located in College Park, Md., and many other fields that serve light aircraft still have turf runways.

- "Grass binds the soil more effectively than any other plant. One single grass plant grown under ideal conditions has a tremendous root system — 387 miles of roots (equivalent to the distance between New York and Montreal!)"

The book is available for \$2 from The Lawn Institute, County Line Road, P.O. Box 108, Pleasant Hill, Tenn. 38578-3722.

'Evolution' book in 2nd printing

The second edition of "Evolution of the Modern Green," by Dr. Michael Hurdzan, is now available from the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

The four-part, full-color brochure presents current information on design, construction and maintenance of golf greens.

Individuals responsible for golf course greens and others interested in how greens are built would find interesting Hurdzan's discussions on the origins of greens as well as the engineering and inner workings of what is the most often discussed aspect of golf.

The brochure explains the various techniques used to build successful golf greens and provides the necessary information for the maintenance of greens.

For a copy of the brochure, send a \$5 check to the American Society of Golf Course Architects, 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill., 60601.

Circle No 352

Ransomes brochure explains Jaguar series

A brochure on Ransomes' new Jaguar 4000 series tractor is now available from the Johnson Creek, Wis., manufacturer.

Easy-to-read, usable information is provided on all four mowers in the line, along with detailed specification data.

The Jaguar 4000 incorporates what Ransomes terms "the best in rotary mowing technology."

Mowing decks of either 61 or 74 inches are available.

For more information contact Lead Inquiry Services, P. O. Box 633, Elm Grove, Wis. 53122. Circle No 353

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