



Crowds attend the Green Section test plot meeting at Mill Road Farm; an operation that will be discontinued unless support is extended by golf clubs.

The Value of Turf Gardens to The Golf Club

By JOHN ANDERSON*

Supt., Crestmont C. C., West Orange, N. J.

THE USGA, especially the Greens Section, has long felt, and many greenkeepers' chairmen and other golf officials have had it brought home to them in many ways, that there was much room for improvement in golf turf.

The greenkeeper found that the turf on his greens was liable to fade out or at least turn brown and look sick after a heavy day's play during hot, humid weather conditions. The greens-chairman would wonder if the greens and fairways would stand the gaff under the heavy play of an important tournament.

As far back as 1908, applications to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for help in solving serious turf problems were made. It was then that the scientists began to realize that expert knowledge on turf was not advanced enough. More investigations, tests and experiments were necessary in order to cope with the many difficult problems that began to crop up, especially on golf courses. At that time a few of the older clubs started to cooperate with the department in order to help solve those problems.

The Green Section of the USGA, in or-

der to try to remedy the lack of knowledge and uncertainty and in answer to many inquiries for help, in 1928 established a series of demonstration turf gardens in different parts of the country, supplementing the work done at their larger experimental stations. It was felt that enough people who were interested in this work were not seeing what was being done at the larger stations. Many who would have liked to study experiments on the ground could not find the time to go far for that purpose.

So the Green Section planted or set up 15 demonstration turf gardens in different sections of the country. It was their belief that by doing this the experiments would be more helpful to clubs and greenkeepers in those particular districts. For instance, tests and observations taken at Arlington would not necessarily apply to New Jersey or Chicago, owing to the difference in soil and climatic conditions. In this way the work of the section at Arlington was brought nearer to the various local sections. Those interested in the planting and maintenance of fine turf grasses and the treatments for different diseases could see results that would apply to their own local conditions.

*NAGA Convention address.

In some sections the local association of greenkeepers had much to do with starting the demonstration plots. Greenkeepers early felt the necessity for the research and experimental work to be undertaken near home. For instance, the Midwest Greenkeepers' associations, in co-operation with the Green Section, was instrumental in definitely establishing the demonstration gardens in Chicago. The general interest taken in this garden has been well worth the expenditure.

In New England, the Greenkeepers' club and the golf clubs in the surrounding district have helped the Green Section in creating a lively interest in the demonstration garden at the Charles River CC. Both greenkeepers and club members have visited the plots to find out how the different projects being tried out were coming along. Away back in March, 1929, F. H. Wilson, greenkeeper at Charles River, who has been in charge of the plots ever since they were laid out, wrote the *Bulletin* of the USGA:

"I was much surprised to find what an interest was taken in these plots by my club members, many of whom have gone over the plots with me, and all visitors including greenkeepers of the locality, have been enthusiastic about them."

In the metropolitan district, which includes Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey, various demonstration plots were laid out and many greenkeepers' meetings have been held at the clubs where the plots are located, especially at Morristown, N. J. These plots have created a great deal of interest, and many people have come to rely on the reports from these demonstrations as a guide to solving their own problems.

Test on Wide Basis

The basic idea for the establishment of the demonstration gardens was that, while the chief experimental work on turf had been carried on at Arlington and then later at the Midwest turf garden and also the New Jersey Experimental turf garden, there was some doubt as to whether the results obtained at these large gardens could be applied in other golf districts where conditions were altogether different, such as soil and climate. Therefore the Green Section felt that a more simple type of demonstration garden would serve to prove whether or not these experimental results could be applied in general.

The demonstration gardens differed

from the experimental or larger gardens in that they did not contain experiments to try and find out anything that was new. In other words, the larger experimental gardens were used to try out entirely new chemicals and new methods of application, in trying out new grasses and new cultural methods as had been done in general agricultural research at the federal and state experimental stations.

Thus the small demonstration gardens were meant to give a general local idea or to hit the high spots. The plots were planted with types of grasses used on both putting greens and fairways and cultivated as such, being treated with representative fertilizers and other treatments.

The main purpose was to find out how the different strains and types of grasses, also fertilizer and other treatments applied to those grasses, held up over a period of years under the different conditions of soil and climate.

Also very important was the fact that they were to be under the supervision of different greenkeepers. The second purpose was to give greenkeepers, greenchairmen, club officials and others interested in the growing of fine turf a chance to visit, in their own neighborhood, a systematically arranged series of plots where they could see for themselves the results of the different treatments, and where they could go as often as possible to follow up the particular demonstration.

Gardens' Value Not Realized

Greenkeepers and club officials often do not realize the amount of valuable work done on these gardens. We are ignorant of the enormous amount of research work which has to be done, the many things which are tried out and discarded, treatments which prove entirely ineffective, but which, without those gardens would sooner or later have to be tried out somewhere—probably on some golf course or courses where the cost to the clubs would be much greater than at the gardens where they have the equipment and know how to use it.

The development of some of the fine turf grasses, treatment for disease and weed control, and valuable data on fertilizers resulting from work at the turf gardens, all are of great help to the greenkeeper and a saving to the clubs who are fortunate in being able to avail themselves of this information from time to time.



Here is the turn-out for Michigan State College's two-day greenkeepers' short course, held December 14-15, 1933, at East Lansing, Michigan. According to C. E. Millar, professor of soils at Michigan State, under whose direction the two-day meet was held, a similar short-course will very likely be held at the college again this coming December due to the enthusiasm of those who attended the meeting just closed.

I am firmly of the belief that if it were not for these gardens many golf clubs would not have been able to cut their maintenance budgets as they have done these last two seasons. If it were not for those experimental stations and some of their research work which we do not hear of, there might be many useless chemicals on the market today.

The demonstration gardens have served a useful purpose in many ways. They have served as excellent places for the local greenkeepers' associations to hold their meetings, so that they can discuss their various turf problems. It is difficult to estimate the actual value of these plots. The results can only be defined by the interest shown. It was estimated that a year ago over 1,000 people had attended the meetings announced by the Green Section, as well as numbers of individuals who visited them singly or in small groups during the season or during the course of the regular meetings of the local organizations.

This valuable research work is in grave danger of having to be discontinued for lack of funds. Can we, who have gathered here at this convention afford to let this happen? At least we ought to do our utmost to see that the valuable experiments which are now well advanced and results about to be obtained, and the money that has already been invested, is not thrown away.

We need the information being developed more than ever today, when every club is seeking to curtail its expenditure for fertilizer, seeds, water, etc., and is faced with several menaces to its turf,

such as Japanese beetle, web worm, chinch bugs, etc. So let us remember there is no substitute for the work of the demonstration gardens and research stations, as their experiments are done under actual conditions pertaining to the different localities and soil conditions in which they are located.

Let us give them the maximum support that it is possible to give. Get your chairmen and other club officials interested. In that way the section will be able to carry on.

Midwest Greenkeepers Elect Brandon Their '34 Head

AT THE January meeting of the Midwest Greenkeepers' assn., A. L. Brandon, sup't of St. Charles (Ill.) CC, was elected to serve as president of the organization for the coming year. Other officers elected were: First vice-pres., C. A. Tregillus, Mill Road Farm course; second vice-pres., Frank Dinelli, Northmoor CC; secy, B. A. Yoder, Westmoor CC; treas., Ralph Teter, Aurora CC. Three directors elected were: R. N. Johnson, Medinah CC; Fred Kruger, Olympia Fields CC; Fred Ingwerson, Bunker Hill GC.

ALTHOUGH several clubs suffered severely, only one golf course was put out of business by the floods in southern California—the Oakmont CC at Glendale. Fairways after the flood looked like samples of the Grand Canyon. Restoration of the club to active service is uncertain.