

Front Cover: Nature's handiwork provides perfect backdrop of scenic beauty for golfers who play this course pictured here through open door of the Ojai Valley Inn, (Calif.).

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Alphatron, New Radioactive Substance, Holds Promise for Turf Benefits

As a result of a program of crop experiments recently announced by the Atomic Energy Commission of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, the possibility of using atomic energy in developing more and better turf has aroused lively interest in the field of golf turf management. Over the past quarter century experimenters have reported that radioactivity stimulates plant tissue growth. Research was started in France 25 years ago by Boris Pregel and continued in this country. Now president of the Canadian Radium & Uranium Corp., Pregel points out that emanations and rays of radium and other radioactive elements have a demonstrable beneficial effect in small doses. While results of demonstrations offered evidence of the potentialities of utilizing radioactive material in crop growth, it is only in recent years that proper compounds of Alpha-radioactive quantities have been determined.

Scientific Soil Products, Inc., a Pregel company, currently is experimenting in adding radioactivity to various types of soil, having developed the precise formula which is known as Alphatron. It contains

1/10,000 of an ounce of Alpha ray material per 10 lbs. For crop growth 10 lbs. per acre the first year, 5 lbs. the second year and 2½ lbs. per year thereafter is believed to be the rate of application to the soil.

In American tests conducted by Pregel in which different combinations of fertilizer were used, results showed that weak Alpha radioactive compounds added to an active fertilizing agent brought plants to maturity early and, in all but one instance, increased the yield. Radioactive materials are not fertilizers by themselves.

Experiments with cucumbers conducted for a large food processing and canning company showed an increase of 51% in number and 60% in increased weight in treating cucumbers. In May, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Agricultural Dept. announced that a series of controlled tests would be conducted with the Commission supplying the funds and the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils & Agricultural Engineering providing the scientific work.

Several greenkeepers are starting experiments with Alphatron to determine its possible benefits to turf culture, using Alphatron both in powder and liquid form, both of which are safe to handle.