

# So. California Starts Turf Research Program

By WALTER E. LANGTON

Chmn., Education Board, National Greenkeeping Supts. Assn.

After many years of persistent effort, the Golf Course Superintendents of Southern California have finally secured a turf experimental station to be placed on the University of Southern California campus. Ever since the pioneering field work of Drs. Piper, Oakley, Monteith, Noer, and all the rest of the famous agrostologists who did most of their valuable work outside of the State of California, the turf boys of this state struggled to secure something they knew was essential to full success of their work. Notwithstanding all the talk of fundamentals being universal, and a predominant factor, in the growing of fine grasses, there is much to be said in favor of valuable localized endeavor.

It is true that wonderful work has been done in the Arlington gardens and in other experimental plots in other parts of the country, and anyone with a sense of values could not minimize the excellent work accomplished. We have to thank those sincere scientists for the introduction of the various kinds of bents and in giving us the best methods in bringing these grasses to perfection.

They also did excellent work with fungicides and bug control. These factors deserve special mention. Most green superintendents were bewildered when they first saw the ravages of large "brown" and dollar spots. When the bents were first introduced and grown out in the greens of Southern California, everyone from the chairman of greens, down to the lowliest laborer on the course thought that our troubles were over for here was a grass that fitted all requirements. It was fine in texture, a beautiful color, an even putting surface. Then lo and behold in the dead of a warm and humid night when we imagined that here was perfect conditions for the growing of beautiful turf an unseen foe was lurking under our turf, sucking out the very vitals of our best grass plants and making our lovely greens a hideous shamblés.

Many superintendents spent sleepless nights wondering if they had done something wrong. Had they irrigated too much or too little, or had they over-fertilized or

given the wrong kind of fertilizer? We pondered, we held meetings, we banded together to fight a common foe. But there is one thing to say in favor of brownpatch, it cemented good will and created the wonderful organization known as the Green Superintendents' Assn. We were in trouble and needed each other's assistance. Here was trouble aplenty. Then, much to our delight, Washington came to our assistance with a formula of calomel and corrosive sublimate. To these men who gave us this formula we take off our hats, for they saved the day.

## Science and the Supts.

Golf superintendents are not scientists in the strict meaning of the word. Our work is too varied and extensive and we are not able to devote all of our time in making experiments in culture, in soil analysis, in plant pathology and in hybridization. For the game has to go on and it is our primary function to see that the game never stops. Hence we have been fighting for a long time to secure the services of competent scientists; men who have the ambition to do something worthwhile. First we had to secure the financial and moral support of those in a position to help us. For many years we have sought this local aid. Often we felt depressed, for no one seemed to think we needed any assistance, but in 1947 the Superintendents' Assn. succeeded in getting the support of the president of the Southern California Golf Assn. and Green Chmn. Simpson of the Los Angeles CC, a man who by his persistent effort secured for us a sympathetic hearing with the regents of the California University at Los Angeles.

Then the members of the Southern California Golf Assn., the parks and cemetery officials and influential home owners all came to our aid. Finally we were able to establish a turf foundation with sufficient funds to run two years. After that what? For after all two years is a short time to make any kind of showing. More money will have to be found to keep the experiments alive or all our efforts will be so much wasted effort. In the past we have witnessed the passing and death of many

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as supervisor of this three-fold program. We believe this program is going to be of considerable interest to the parents, as well as a service, not only to the boys but the players as well. There are a number of advantages which caddying offers to the boys of the neighborhood.

1. It will give him a chance to play and associate with other fine boys from his and other communities. Many of the friends we make as caddies will last for a life time.

2. It is a good way for him to help his parents, if help is needed. (Many boys earn enough money to buy some of their clothing and all of their entertainment.) Makes the boy appreciate the value of money and prepares him for the day when he is grown and on his own.

3. Not only the great golfers but most of the rank and file players started out as caddies. It is a game once learned that can be played for a lifetime.

4. It is usually his first job, and by being trained to caddy well, it gives him good work habits which will be invaluable later on when he graduates to other types of work. Records that boys who were good caddies have been successful in other lines of endeavor.

5. A good caddy is one who learns the duties of caddying to the very best of his ability, is courteous, attentive, and interested in seeing that his player enjoys his round of golf. These duties will be taught by the caddy supervisor and his committee.

6. Our aim is to develop a paternal attitude toward the boys by our own personnel and the players who engage the services of the caddies.

If you wish to learn more about this program and service call PR 7359 and ask for anyone of the committee listed below:

Mr. H. L. Roettger, Caddy Supervisor  
Mr. Marty Kavanaugh, Mgr. and Pro  
Mr. Carl Rohmann, Asst. Mgr. & Pro

**SO. CALIF. RESEARCH***(Continued from page 64)*

well intentioned schemes for want of funds. War years and depression years come along when there is neither desire nor funds to keep alive valuable experimental plots and we must guard against a repetition of this evil.

**California Grass Needs**

It is too early to even lay down a tentative program as much organization work has to be done before experiments are started. But perhaps a suggestion or two will not be out of order. I would like to see produced among other grasses, a grass plant that would cover our mountains; a

*Golfdom*

plant with deep enough roots and strong enough to prevent soil erosion and make our melting snows and rain water walk down hill instead of run down. For in the past lives have been lost and much valuable property has been destroyed by the onrush of water down our mountain sides, and given the time and the funds I believe it is possible for some young agrostologist to produce such a grass plant. A grass plant that will beautify our hills and prevent this colossal waste and destruction from taking place.

Then again we should have produced for us a fine textured grass with plenty of deep roots, free from disease, a root structure that will dig deep and secure for itself sufficient soil water to sustain a healthy and vigorous growth without the constant irrigation and flooding that is now necessary to keep our turf alive and healthy.

Experiments should be made with different kinds of fertilizer that will suit a particular kind of soil and have more lasting qualities than the bulk of the fertilizers we use today. All these experiments mean hard work and slow procedure. We must be patient and sympathetic, for there are no royal and easy roads to success. Nature is in no hurry and abhors quick transitions. We see this slow process of fixing a type in the seaside bents. We look over a bent green and see the various shades of color. We notice the different texture; some coarse and some very fine. We see them change from a light color to a dark color and fine plants developing a coarse habit for the genes are not finally fixed, but by thoughtful experimentation we shall discover a fixed type, one that will permanently retain its color and texture.

These are some of the things that must be included in our program and, given the right kind of personal care, much can be accomplished.

## MINIMUM ACCOUNT

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somewhat lower than those of the night clubs and cafes which country club members patronize.

### Habit Is Formed

Tam O'Shanter prior to the adoption of the minimum charge plan, as now, had lively entertainment programs calculated to bring out members. That entertainment didn't draw in the pre-minimum days as it does now. The habit of coming to the club was established when everyone wanted to make sure that they were ahead of the minimum. The push was psychological rather than logical, as most of the members normally were spending more than the minimum.

July, 1948



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