Brains Pooling Biggest Factor in Maintenance Progress

By HERB SHAVE

In the last analysis the great progress of the past 25 years in golf course maintenance is primarily due to the eagerness of men in the business to pool their observations, discoveries and the actual or promising solutions of their problems.

We've learned to put at least one idea of our own into the cooperative store of brains in our profession and draw forth for the benefit of our clubs the good ideas of all our co-workers.

Herb Shave

During the past 25 years new strains of grasses have been developed and appraised in actual service on courses. This work continues to advance.

The USGA Green Section has done marvelous work of research and coordinating experiment station, laboratory and course scientific endeavor.

The state colleges and state experiment stations have contributed tremendously to research in grasses, diseases, fertilizers, watering and other essentials of fine turf production and maintenance, and have supplied facilities and personnel that have greatly helped the men at the golf clubs.

Organizations Valuable

Formation of the course superintendents into a strong national association has been of immense value to clubs and golfers and I'd like to see for the good of all golf a much larger membership in the national and section superintendents' associations.

Tribute must be paid to the chemical companies whose experts work so closely with the superintendents and the USGA, state and national department of agriculture authorities in striving for safe and economical control of turf diseases and destructive insects. Also contributing greatly to the pool of brains from which the superintendent has been able to draw in progressing in his profession, are the experts of the fertilizer and equipment companies. The successful use of 2,4-D has accounted for the most apparent revolutionary improvement in golf course conditioning during the past few years, but of similar importance has been the rapidly extending use of aerification in providing conditions that facilitate the close, deep and healthy growth of desirable grasses, leaving but little room for the undesirable weeds.

Improvement in power course maintenance machinery and watering facilities has come a long way. Some clubs seem inclined to think that almost all maintenance is by machinery and chemicals now, but that's not nearly the case. There's watering, top-dressing, fertilizing, fungicide treatments, mowing and many other tasks, big and little, routine and emergency, in which there is no substitute for the informed and resourceful man.

Making the brains of all of us available to any one of us is the biggest thing that's happened in golf course maintenance during the past quarter century.

GOLFDOM has been of value beyond reckoning in promotion of this phase of progress in golf. Lots of luck to it.

Herb Shave, supt. of Oakland Hills CC, where this year's National Open was played, is a vigorous, alert leader of his profession at 76, with more than a half century's experience in course maintenance — Editor.

Chemical Advance Greatest of 25 Years on Courses

By LEO J. FESER

Leo Feser

It seems to me that the greatest progress made in turf management in the past 25 years has been the development and application of chemicals for weed, insect and disease control. While admitting that there is still need of much research in control of these pests, I am all for presenting the loving cup to the people who have given us the chemicals to do a job that was impossible to do in 1926.

While considerable progress has been made in the management of water in soils, I think this phase of turf management rates a poor second to the chemical phase. It appears that the next 25 years will bring tremendous progress in water management in soil, and the men who have given us tools to get air down into the soil are leading the way to better management and water conservation.

A lot of progress has been made along many lines. The development of better machinery and the architectural adjustment of golf courses to the use of that machinery has taken the edge off of the sharp rises in labor costs. National and sectional meetings of turf men have

Mr. Feser, one of the leaders in Minnesota and national superintendents' organizations and educational work, has not only been responsible for the maintenance of Woodhull, one of the best conditioned private courses for more than 30 years, but has maintained and operated a fee course of his own. He is regarded by his colleagues as one of the top practical men in course maintenance. — Editor.

speeded up the average "know-how" of course maintenance.

It is only fair, I think, to express an opinion on what might well be the greatest lack of progress. That is the attitude of average club officials on the value of a capable superintendent. Turf men have failed, I think, in this very important matter. There is little in the way of paycheck prospects to induce young men to train for superintending the maintenance of country clubs, and we have done little to educate officials along this line. As a result we have few young men in the business today, and the golf clubs are bound to suffer a lack of capable superintendents in the next 25 years.

I think that of the thousands of ideas to which I have been exposed because of my fortunate contact with other turf men, the one which has meant the most to me was suggested by Dr. Stakeman of the University of Minnesota Farm School many years ago. In the early '20s I was convinced that if one good variety of bent could be established on all of my greens, the problem of maintenance would be simplified to a routine procedure and my club would enjoy uniform putting surfaces of every green.

Dr. Stakeman pointed out the weakness of this reasoning by drawing a comparison with the experience of wheat growers and their constant battle against diseases affecting wheat. He explained why no variety of wheat remains immune to rust and other diseases, and why it was necessary to breed and test new varieties in the never-ending battle.

It occurred to me that what was true of wheat could be true of bent. I discarded by "single bent" theory and substituted a type for a variety. Since that time many of the old "varieties" have gone bad, but thanks to a constant effort to keep many varieties of similar type on my greens, the average putting surface on all of my greens has been much better than would have been possible had I held to my original opinion.

Quick Use of Research Has Speeded Supt's. Progress

By JOHN McGREGOR

Joe and Herb Graffis saw the necessity for a national golf magazine, which would cover all phases of golf club activities, twenty-five years ago.

After much hard work with Herb as editor, collecting material which would be of interest to all executives in the business of golf, and Joe as publisher and advertising manager, securing advertisements to help defray the expense of printing and distributing the magazine, the net result was GOLFDOM, a paper which is eagerly looked for and read by the heads of each department. It has truly fulfilled the dreams and expectations of Herb and Joe. Congratulations!

There have been so many contributing factors in golf course maintenance during the past 25 years that it is difficult to catalog them.

Turf research has contributed much toward the development of fine turf. 25 years ago the Green Section of the USGA contributed nearly all of the research work done. Today many colleges and universities are taking an active part in turf problems, maintaining turf plots and endeavoring to solve the many problems with which the grower of fine turf is confronted.

It is only fair to state their efforts have proved to be of the utmost value. Golf has been benefitted beyond estimate by their continual search for and development of grasses most suitable for putting greens, fairways, tees and rough in the various areas of the U.S. and Canada.

Supt. Hungry for Facts.

The course superintendent is very much aware of the value of research and is hungry for any information that will aid him in providing better playing conditions for those who love golf. Every field day at the experiment stations, wherever they may be held, you will find in ever increasing numbers the practical men who have to produce the finished product. These men are serious students of the profession, and readily absorb the information available and put it to mighty good use.

Conrtol of fungus diseases has developed through the years to the point where "dollar spot" and other fungus diseases are no problem. Intelligent application of the information at hand is without doubt the answer.

Years ago fertilization of fine turf was not given serious thought. We used to apply bone meal, sheep manure or any material which would improve the color of the grass. Soil analysis had not developed to a point where it was of any