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## Supts. Are Put "In the Middle" by Publicity

Golf course superintendents who have been accustomed to being the game's "forgotten men" recently had publicity show that the public regards them as the top practical experts in turf. Then the superintendents learned that publicity, like growing grass, is accompanied by trouble.

Quick reaction to general publicity on a soil conditioner had the lawn and garden public, whether or not they belonged to golf clubs, rushing to superintendents asking whether or not to use the material. Due to the manufacturers not having briefed the superintendents adequately and the golf course men not having had material to make their own preliminary tests the public couldn't get the expert help it has learned to expect from superintendents.

The USGA Green Section has set up a fellowship for research on the soil conditioning materials and manufacturers are making their materials available to superintendents for their own tests and experiments so impartial authoritative investigation may be made in close coordination with superintendents' own investigations.

## New Grass Publicity Confuses

Another recent case of publicity that spotlighted the superintendents also revealed that publicity is an instrument to be handled with care. Sensational general publicity on the Merion-Meyer zoysia mixture got beyond control of the Green Section and put superintendents in uncomfortable positions.

The general publicity had the mixture described as a miracle grass with almost every imaginable merit everywhere and no faults. The result was that golfers who saw the general publicity asked why their superintendents didn't have the wonder grass on their courses.

Nothing was said in the general publicity about the shortage of the mixture or about the tests which showed the merit of the mixture having satisfied authorities who conducted the tests at a comparatively recent date. The technical, climatic and supply problems with which the superintendents, the Green Section, and the state college and experiment station authorities are conversant were not mentioned in the newspaper and magazine publicity.

Another reaction to the runaway publicity was to arouse some belief that the answer to all turf research now was to put in the new "perfect" grass which, according to the sensational publicity, represented the ultimate achievement of turf research.

As all specialists in fine turf work know there is more work to be done in

Golfdom

turf research, and more money required for this research, than ever before. The Green Section, the state experimental stations and colleges and regional turf foundations have been doing dollars' worth of work with fractions of pennies and the demand for their services is constantly increasing.

In the case of the Merion-Meyer zoysia mixture it'll be years before enough is available to meet the demands of courses where the grass is an excellent answer. But, due to the "miracle" grass story getting out of hand golfers are wondering why the Merion-Meyer zoysia wasn't put in all over the courses by superintendents. Even if the material were available in carloads it still would cost money to change over where it could be used and the budgets are rather tight these days.

But it's all been an instructive experience in publicity for the superintendents even with the backfires that called for considerable explanation. It revealed that the public generally now rates golf course superintendents as the most conveniently available practical authorities on turf.

## KELLER'S PROMOTION SCORES



Walter Keller (R) of Sunset Fields Fairways, Los Angeles, receives golf range "promotion of the year" award from Fred Eaton, pres., Southern California Driving Range Assn. The top promote was the clinic at Keller's range when the public hit shots and top Southern California pros wrote their comments and helpful advice on the players' swings in notebooks kept by the customers.

The pro who can get a record of members' birthdays from club files has a valuable sales promotion list for his use.

A letter to the member's wife before his birthday suggesting a golf gift usually is a most welcome tip for the wife or others of the member's family.

