

# Southeast Appraises Its Turf Research Plan

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(GCSA Paper)

In establishing and maintaining a turfed area, the golf course superintendent is faced with a multitude of disturbing decisions. He is directly faced with all the factors which limit or promote plant growth. Which methods to use and their application to local conditions is of paramount importance. A definite chain of thought is generally followed in reaching a conclusion: what has been done; what is being done now; and are the practices applicable locally?

A large number of plants can be used for the production of turf in the Southeast. Mild winters and an apparently adequate rainfall make conditions ideal for year-round turf production. Thus, the challenge and interest in growing grass for turf purposes have become the cornerstones for turf research and practical turf production.

Actually, the first turf research program for the Southeast was started as late as 1946. It was then that representatives of the USGA Green Section, Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station, and the United States Department of Agriculture decided that (1) a turf program was needed in the Southeast, (2) Tifton, Ga., was the place to start it, (3) initially it would be supported with what funds could be raised, (4) and that others would be asked to help. Within a short time, another program supported by Florida, the Florida Experiment Station, and the USGA Green Section was started at Belle Glade, Fla.

## Turf Progress

Golf clubs and associations in the Southeast were the first to be approached for support. Then, as even today, very good response was obtained. In fact, golf has done more for the improvement of turf in the Southeast than any other organization. If we consider turf improvement in other parts of the United States and the role which the golfing world has played, indeed, the continued efforts of Southeastern golf clubs and associations to obtain better turf is not surprising.

Even though the statement has gone unchallenged that "More taxpayers are directly interested in turf than any other agriculture field", it is a startling fact that only two states, Pennsylvania and

Florida, have tax-supported turf programs. This simply means that the programs now existing in the United States on turf improvement and extension are supported largely by golf. Thus, many individuals and organizations not holding stock in the supporting company are receiving valuable dividends which are being used to improve turfed areas throughout the country.

It is of interest to note, as evidenced during the October, 1951, National Turf Field Days held at Beltsville, Md., that the role of golf in the specialized agricultural field of turf is not confined to the United States, but is somewhat international in scope. Golf organizations should receive full credit for their efforts.

If programs of turf improvements now established throughout the country are to yield products of continuous value and meet the increasing demands of the turf producer, it is apparent that other institutions outside of golf will have to lend a helping hand. Turf production has been recognized as a part of the field of agriculture and accepted by agronomists and other agriculturists. The supporting arm, therefore, of this phase of agriculture should feel free to share its efforts with other organizations.

## Southeastern Problem

As in other developmental fields of agriculture or research, progress in turf in any particular area is supplemented or aided by turf improvement programs in other localities. The future of Southeastern turf depends not only on the type of program which can be maintained, but also on developments in turf and related fields within and outside of the region. With the type of growing season, climate, and soils found in the Southeast, it is seen that even though the basic principles of growing grass may be the same, we are faced with the problem of varying the procedures to meet local needs. Climate has dictated the types of plants which must be used for turf purposes. Thus, the development of better turf plants is an added task. Experimental data on weed, disease, and insect control, fertilization, adaptation, and management of grasses, and grass breeding have been obtained.

(Continued on page 96)

## 1952 TURF CONFERENCES



THE 25th ANNUAL UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS WINTER SCHOOL FOR GREENKEEPERS (L to R) Back Row: Instructors Geoffrey S. Cornish, Paul J. Murphy, Lawrence S. Dickinson, William H. Tague. Center Row: Ray L. Howard, Bend (Ore.) GC; John D. Houdek, Arrowhead GC, Wheaton, Ill.; Richard Sullivan, The Orchards GC, South Hadley, Mass.; David D. Gourlay, Kapuskasing GC, Kapuskasing, Ontario; William G. Miller, Mountain View GC, Bolton, Mass. Front Row: William A. Peterson and Louis H. Bargmann, both of Washington Public Golf Courses, Washington, D. C.; Harry G. Wall, Cortland (N.Y.) CC; Robert O. Jehu, Silver Lake GC, Orland Park, Ill.; Carmen Ceo, Seneca Falls (N.Y.) CC; John J. Perry, Purpooodock GC, South Portland, Maine; John J. Murphy, Mt. Hood GC, Melrose, Mass.; William B. Krafft, Fox Lake (Ill.) GC.

**Mar. 3-6—Turf Conference.** Midwest Regional Turf Foundation and Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind.

**Mar. 5-7—Minnesota Turf Conference and Short Course,** Curtis Hotel, Minneapolis.

**Mar. 10-12—18th Annual Superintendents and Turf Assn. Short Course,** Iowa State College, Ames.

**Mar. 11—Lawn and Turf Conference,** Campbell Hall, Ohio State University, Columbus.

**Mar. 13-14—Univ. of Massachusetts Annual Turf Conference,** Amherst.

**Mar. 13-14—21st Annual Turf Conference,** Michigan State College, East Lansing.

## SOUTHEAST APPRAISERS

*(Continued from page 54)*

Even with the amount of information on hand, the story is incomplete.

Most of the turf weeds which occur in the Southeast have been controlled by one or more of the herbicides now in use. Crabgrass has been controlled by the use of potassium cyanate, sodium arsenite, lead arsenite, and mercurial compounds. Potassium cyanate, sodium arsenite, and the mercurial compounds have also given good control of goose grass or crowfoot, Egyptian crabgrass, and other weeds. There is a great need, however, for materials or methods which will yield selective control of nutgrass, Dallis grass, and sandspurs. *Poa annua* is regarded both as a welcome gift of nature and as a weed. As long as such attitudes exist, methods for the control and management of *Poa annua* are needed.

As in other sections of the United States, disease control is quite a problem. We simply do not know enough about the

organisms causing the diseases. Disease control will continue to be difficult unless we concern ourselves with the fact that the field of turf is lacking in fundamental knowledge of disease organisms. Good results by the use of the many chemicals now available should not be expected as long as control measures are aimed at the symptoms or damage of the disease rather than the organism. In each region the need is great for basic facts about diseases.

Insect control has been adequate and, apparently, continued success is in sight.

The lime and fertilizer requirements of southern turf grasses has been extensively studied. Various organic and inorganic sources of nitrogen have been tested for turf production. The establishment and maintenance of our best southern and cool-season turf grasses has also received attention. Research has paved the way for the first centipede grass seed production and distribution. Replanting greens with improved Bermuda types has been facilitated by the use of methyl bromide.

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The problematical pivotal period of southern turf production—Bermuda to rye grass and rye grass to Bermuda—has been eliminated by the use of improved Bermuda grasses. More management studies are needed, however, for the superintendent who maintains common seeded Bermuda grass greens.

An organic material for topdressing has been produced. After composting for one year a mixture composed of one part sewage sludge, three parts old pine sawdust, six parts sandy loam, and 15 pounds of calcium cyanamid per cubic yard has, apparently, been satisfactory for turf production. Data is needed, however, on the significance of properties given to a soil by the use of this and other materials.

Turf cultivation has received a lot of attention in the past few years. It is true that the theoretical aspects of this new turf field are encouraging. Do we know, however, that it is beneficial or economically worthwhile to place fertilizers in the soil root zone? At what compaction levels do the movements of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and water become limiting plant growth factors? Will all grasses respond alike to heavy compaction? What effect does soil type have on these questions and root penetration?

Programs of breeding and selection of

better turf grasses have been in progress for several years. Fruitful products have been obtained and the future looks promising. Tifton 57 Bermuda grass has been found to be superior to common seeded Bermuda and many strains found on golf clubs in the Southeast for putting green purposes. It is of interest to note that Tifton 57 is also being used for lawn, tee, and fairway turf. Better textured Bermudas for putting greens are on the way.

A two-year course in turf management is being offered for the first time in the Southeast by the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton, Ga. Consultation services to golf clubs and periodic publications are not an adequate medium of extension. More personal contacts need to be made with the turf producer.

### Is Future Secure?

Recently our government established a freely-operating committee which has the responsibility of channeling scientists and basic scientific research into fields which need strengthening or advancement. Thus, it was recognized that the United States was falling behind in its basic scientific facts. The only solution was to prevent certain fields from becoming overloaded and to give scientists free movement, support, and time to solve basic problems.

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culture that has, in part, been parasitic on advances in other agricultural fields. Basic facts have been borrowed and applied to turf production. To date some of these have worked fine, but it should be realized that turf cannot build its future on borrowed research. Turf research personnel should be given an opportunity to spend more time trying to discover basic facts.

If we were pessimistic about the future of Southeastern turf, we might feel as the philosopher, Bertrand Russell, who said that, "The future must be either much better or much worse than the past—which it is to be, we do not know, but those who are young will know before long." Progress to date, however, leads one only to conclude that Southeastern turf has a definite place in developmental agriculture.

### DAVIS HOLDS ANNUAL PARTY

One of the most successful group gatherings in Chicago district golf circles is the annual spring Open House of the Geo. A. Davis organization. This year's Davis "open", according to Oscar Borgmeier, v.p., set a record for entries, with golf club officials and superintendents throughout Illinois and bordering Wisconsin and In-

diana attending the Feb. 21 event held at the company headquarters at 5040 Northwest Highway. The golf course equipment and supplies, always attractively displayed, got sharp focus attention from a continuous flow of guests. Needless to say the oyster, sandwich and other bars were not overlooked. Missed, was George Davis whose grounded plane delayed his return to Chicago.

### RICKEY ELECTED TO SPORTS, INC. BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Robert D. Rickey, sales manager of the golf professional division of Sports Products, Inc., (MacGregor Goldsmith and MacGregor Golf) since 1948 has been elected to the Advisory Committee to the Board of Directors of the parent company and named

to the Board of Directors of MacGregor Golf Co., it has been recently announced.

Rickey started with MacGregor his first year of high school when he worked in the

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