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# Turfgrass Questions Answered

By FRED V. GRAU

Dr. Grau, former director of the USGA Green Section and now agronomist of West Point Products Corp., in this department of GOLFDOM answers questions asked by those in golf course maintenance work.

Dr. Grau's extensive contacts among golf course superintendents at their courses and at turfgrass conferences, and his close association with the men at experiment stations, give him an authoritative close-up on sound course maintenance.

You are invited to submit questions which Dr. Grau will be happy to answer, basing his solutions to your problems on a vast fund of late and nation-wide information which he has available.

Address your questions to Fred V. Grau, Turfgrass Q&A, Golfdom, 407 S. Dearborn, Chicago 5, Ill.

Progress in the turfgrass industry is moving along quickly. New products, and with them, new methods of turfgrass maintenance, are being introduced in rapid succession. There are new machines, new chemicals, new grasses. How to use these new products to best advantage brings many questions to mind.

My work gives me the opportunity to meet with many golf course superintendents who are trying out new products and new methods on their own courses. I am able to attend the many turfgrass conferences throughout the country. And I meet with the men at the experiment stations, where new products and methods are being tested. The information gained from these various contacts may be helpful to superintendents trying out a new product or procedure. The purpose of this column is to pass along the information to those who can use it.

You are invited to submit questions, and we shall be happy to supply the answers based upon the latest information we have available.

**Q—Can Merion bluegrass be seeded into our fairways when we renovate this fall? (Ohio)**

A—Merion can be seeded into established fairways but it is likely to be several years before the effect of seeding is noticed because Merion seedlings will have a difficult time competing with *Poa annua* and bent and other grasses. The earlier in the fall it can be seeded the better, in order to get good germination before *Poa annua* competes.

**Q—We have an area of Merion turf, and there are places in it that are turning brown and throw off a brown dust when mowed. What is the trouble? (Maryland)**

A—The Merion is suffering from rust. It is agreed by research scientists that the rust is favored by lack of nitrogen and shortage of water, both of which imply slow growth. Test plots at various locations show that rust occurs only where Merion turf is dry and hungry. The Merion is not harmed and when it is supplied with adequate water and nitrogen it should become beautiful again.

**Q**—Four years ago we tried to establish bent in our fairways. By now the fairways are mostly native bermuda and crabgrass. How can we obtain better fairways? (Calif.)

**A**—Encourage the bermuda, which is one of the better fairway grasses when properly fed, cultivated and mowed. Crabgrass ceases to be a problem in well-fed bermuda turf; adequate nitrogen fertilizer is especially important with bermuda. Bermuda responds to cultivation and requires a minimum of water.

**Q**—We were unable to fertilize the fairways as we should, and as a result have a bad clover problem. What is the best way to check the clover before we begin with a good fertilizer program? (Iowa)

**A**—Chances are in your area you have basically a bluegrass sod. Clover may have been the result of leafspot injury as well as inadequate feeding. The best clover control that we now have is 2,4,5-T. If there are broad-leaved weeds, a 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T mixture, commonly sold as "brush-killer" is the preferred material. The mixture should provide one pound 2,4,5-T (actual acid) and ½ pound 2,4-D per acre. Early fall is a good time to treat clover, just prior to aerifying and fertilizing.

**Q**—We get a lot of snowmold through the winter which ruins our *Poa annua* and most bents. Is there a bent for putting greens that is resistant? (Canada)

**A**—Congressional bent (C-19) is recommended.

**Q**—We wish to develop a polycross bent nursery. Where can we get seed? (New York)

**A**—There is no polycross bent seed available this year. It has been promised for 1955 in very limited quantities. The true name for polycross bent now is Penn-cross.

**Q**—We wish to establish an improved bermuda on tees. Is it too late to plant it this year? (Illinois)

**A**—Mid to late August is about the limit for sprigging an adapted bermuda in the area through the central midwest and southern Pennsylvania. Solid sodding, which is highly recommended on tees, can be done through September.

**Q**—We have a heavily shaded tee, and have been unable to keep grass on it. We would like to improve it this fall. What would you suggest? (Massachusetts)

**A**—Thoroughly cultivate and fertilize to prepare the soil for seeding. Seed with a mixture of *Poa trivialis* and *Astoria bent*.

**Q**—We have a lot of weeds coming into our turf that are not affected by ordinary herbicides. The weed has a small leaf with a reddish spot in the center and it has a milky juice. What is the weed and what is a possible control? (Indiana)

**A**—The weed probably is milk purslane, also called spotted spurge. To date the best material we know of to control it is sodium chlorate. This material is a fire hazard if the spray is allowed to fall on clothing and allowed to dry. It can be used with safety mixed with sand and applied dry. Eight to 12 oz. to 1000 sq. ft. is a good starting point. This may need to be increased somewhat. Dinitro compounds have given good results in some cases. Follow the manufacturers' instructions for use.

**Q**—We would like to establish a good grass in the roughs; one which will do a good job of reducing weeds. What grass do you suggest? (Pa.)

**A**—One of the favorite grasses is sheep fescue, but it is difficult to obtain. Many golf courses are introducing Alta or Kentucky 31 fescue into roughs where they feel the need for a sturdy grass to produce real rough. Sow seed in late summer or early fall. Seed must be placed deeply in the soil. Excellent results have been obtained by aerifying the old sod several times over before seeding. Tall fescues should be seeded at the rate of about 200 lbs. to the acre to produce a solid turf.

**Q**—What is the Verti-cut designed to do?

**A**—The Verti-cut is designed to be operated like a greens mower, taking off small portions of runners and old leaves each time it is used. It is intended for frequent, regular use. The Verti-cut is a maintenance machine, not a renovator.

**Q**—How often should the Verti-cut be used?

**A**—It varies. Once a week is an average interval. In some cases, Verti-cutting can be done every other week. And we know of superintendents who are Verti-cutting greens twice each week.

**Q**—Why the difference in frequency of use?

**A**—The once-a-week or once every-other-week use is adequate to control grain. Whether Verti-cutting to control grain is needed every week or every two weeks depends upon the kind of grass and how vigorously it is growing. Where weeds or seedheads are a problem, Verti-cutting twice a week is needed to maintain a smooth, even putting surface.