

Turfgrass Questions Answered

By FRED V. GRAU

Dr. Grau will welcome questions on course maintenance subjects from superintendents, green chairmen, club and public course officials. There is no charge or obligation attached to this service. Address Queries—Grau, Golfdom, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill.

"MANAGEMENT" has become one of the most important words in the turfgrass industry.

At conferences and meetings all over the country we hear more and more discussions on the management of many things relating to the turf on golf courses, including soils, grasses, water, chemicals, fertilizers, machines, and men. The obvious implication is that management is a function of men and their decisions. At the recent Penn State Conference Prof. Higbee said that man's worst enemy is man himself. At the same conference this writer said that one of the most important basic causes of poor turf is people. The two statements say virtually the same thing.

Dr. James Watson repeatedly has said that the most important thing in management is man. This writer has taken the word a step further.

The next syllable, age, implies that we have left the era of cheap hand labor and that we are now in the Machine Age when we need to train men to know what a specialized machine is designed to do, to learn how to operate it properly and to keep it in perfect operating condition.

Men, the third syllable, characterizes the workmen that the superintendent must train to do these special jobs with the aid of precision powered tools. Thus, if the man in management (the superintendent) has surrounded himself with the modern precision tools of the machine age, and has adequately trained his men in their use in relation to the grasses and soils, then the turf that he produces will suit everyone to a "T". This is our concept of the turfgrass implications of the word

To us, the superintendent rates another upward rung in the ladder of professional and financial achievement by virtue of the fact that he is by necessity

a teacher with grave responsibilities.

Upon him rests the burden of teaching every man under him the basic principles of management as they apply to soils, grasses, machines, techniques and everything else. He must train his men to recognize quality as well as flaws, deficiencies as well as excesses, beauty as well as utility.

The management of golf turf for the enjoyment of people has little in common with what is best for the grass or the soil or the machines. To please the people the superintendent must do many things that are contrary to his better agronomic judgment. It becomes his inescapable responsibility to make the decisions that will provide his people with enjoyable turf in spite of the imposed handicaps of excess traffic from dawn to dark, a four-some every six minutes, wet grass every morning when the greens have to be mowed, constant trampling on wet soils bringing about compaction, and so on *ad infinitum*.

The amazing thing is that so many golf courses have such surprisingly good turf which, naturally, the members simply take for granted. It is a great tribute to the management ability of the golf course superintendents who, I am sure, won't mind being "taken for granted" providing they are given the men, the money and the machines with which to do the job, and are given the chance to do their work unhindered.

* * *

Q—What is the true relationship between the use of Nitrogen and the occurrence of dollarspot and brownpatch? (N. J.)

A—Dollarspot is worst under conditions of nitrogen starvation. With ample nitrogen dollarspot is virtually non-existent. Just the reverse is true with brownpatch. The answer is a moderate level of nitro-