

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.

GOLF courses are looked to as the turfgrass proving grounds of the world today. A new product put forth for use at any area where turfgrass of high quality is desired cannot claim to have been proven until it has been accepted for practical use on a golf course.

The golf courses also are the show windows of everything required for the production and maintenance of fine turfgrass, whether for sports or residential or commercial use or other beautification and utility.

This vast and sharp focus of public inspection on the golf course superintendents' work, and the superintendents' powerful and far-reaching influence on the marketing of everything needed for growing and retaining fine turfgrass, has placed a heavy professional responsibility on the men who manage golf courses.

During World War II when it became apparent to military leaders that grass was a strategic engineering material, many golf course superintendents were called upon to assist in far-flung grassing projects. It is a credit to the profession that superintendents were able to convert and translate their knowledge of peacetime pursuits into something of great military value.

Seeds and stolons and sprigs of almost every grass that has or is believed to have turf value have been planted at one time or another on golf courses. Here they have been subjected to tremendous variations in soils, climate and management. Here only the hardiest survive to be called superior.

Machines designed for the maintenance of turfgrass areas receive the "acid test" on the golf course.

Those that are accepted and used regularly very soon are adapted for use on other areas for other turf interests. It has been said "the development and main-

tenance of a putting green represents the highest form of agriculture".

Golf course tees are similar in many respects to athletic fields where cleated shoes and constant trampling render grass growing difficult, to say the least. Fairways are closely akin to the kind of lawns that millions of folks would like to have. The rough on the golf course is like the city park, the highway strips or the local airfield in many respects.

The golf course superintendent can be secure in the knowledge that even though his authoritative position may not be publicly acknowledged and appreciated, millions of people depend upon the kind of practical grass information that he has helped to develop and accumulate.

Q—I am a doctor and on occasions when I have free time I would like to be able to do some practice putting in my backyard. How do you build a backyard putting green? (Del.)

A—The first thing to do is to consult with a local golf course superintendent who is the authority on putting greens in the area. The superintendent can look over the site and see if the location is suitable, if the soil is favorable, and other technical details.

Cost of establishing and maintenance may be important. In a few cases the superintendent may let one of his workmen care for the green after hours. If the green is to be bentgrass, the details of fertilizing, watering, mowing and spraying for diseases are too much for the layman and should be handled by the best professional turfgrass man—the golf course superintendent.

It may be possible that the local golf course may have a nursery of putting green sod which could be moved intact to produce the putting green quickly. To

grow it from bent stolons or seed would take the better part of a year.

If the green is to be used mainly during the heat of the summer it may be well to consider planting the green with sprigs of an improved Bermudagrass which spreads rapidly and needs little or no fungicidal treatments, is not easily damaged and in general will produce a more foolproof putting green for the home lawn. All Bermudagrasses lose their green color in winter and, in the more northerly areas, some may winterkill entirely.

Regardless of the kind of grass used, a putting green should be mowed every day or every other day. Occasional aerifying and vertical mowing will help to keep the green in good condition. These services are becoming available on a custom basis from landscape gardeners and lawn service firms so that a homeowner need not be obliged to purchase, store and maintain this specialized equipment.

Q—I have been told that I can use hydrated lime on my bent greens to help control brownpatch. Is this safe? How much should I use? (Va.)

A—Hydrated lime is a respected and proven practice to aid in checking brownpatch during hot muggy weather. It acts

in at least two ways, to rapidly change the pH (reaction) of the surface and to dry the grass, both of which check the growth of fungus.

To add more water as a spray at a time when an excess of moisture already favors the organisms is not the best way to check brownpatch.

A treatment that helps to dry the grass will help check the spread of the disease. Two pounds of hydrated lime to 1,000 sq. ft. dusted on and allowed to remain is considered a safe application. Avoid using any soluble nitrogen fertilizer within a couple days of using hydrated lime because this active form of lime will release ammonia gas which can cause grass burns.

Q—Can one save the plugs from the aerifying of greens and economically put them into the soil bed of a new green? (Ida.)

A—Yes. This practice is growing in popularity and it makes it practical to have "every green a nursery". One enterprising superintendent we know planted a new nursery and all his new greens with the cores from aerifying his bent greens of a superior strain.

It is well to use the thatch spoons in



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