
Turfgrass Questions Answered by Grau

If you've got a question you want Dr. Fred V. Grau to help you answer in this department, please address it to Grau Q&A, Golfdom, 407 S. Dearborn, Chicago 5, Ill.

THIS month I am reporting on a visit to an outstanding course where there is an outstanding supt. who has an outstanding chmn. Between them they are responsible for making the course what it is.

Woodmont CC A Study In Teamwork

The course is in prime condition. The supt. has an air of confidence. He says the good condition of his course comes from closely following the teachings of experiment stations and other leaders in the turfgrass field. The fact that he is permitted to follow the most recent practices is a credit to his chmn. The supt. himself should get credit for being alert and for following through.

Mutual confidence between supt. and chmn. results in the supt. getting nearly anything he asks in equipment. Getting what he needs to do the job results in members having a near perfect course to play.

It is not our usual policy to single out one from among many excellent supts. for special mention. But many of you will be coming to the 1958 Turfgrass Conference and Show in Washington, D. C. and will want to visit Woodmont CC at nearby Rockville, Md., where Bob Shields and his chmn., Leopold Freudberg, are giving dramatic proof of the value of teamwork. Progressive thinking by the supt. and the confidence and backing of a well-informed chmn. feature this teamwork.

When we visit Bob's course we make a beeline for the nurseries (notice the plural). After we have studied them (and not until then), we inspect the course.

Of great significance in Washington's climate was Bob's remark about his C-1 and C-19 greens. "I rarely look at them; they don't give me any trouble. We aerify them, we use the Verti-cut, we feed them and keep them dry. That's about all there is to it." The greens are just about the ultimate in perfection.

The next statement was significant too:

"Why is it I can have such lovely greens and such lousy collars and tees?" Therein lies a major use for Bob's nurseries. Some tees are being planted to U-3 from one nursery. Others are being planted to Ugan-dagrass from another nursery. Still another has been sodded to a "blend." He doesn't feel that we have the answer yet on the bone-hard collars but you can be sure he will be doing something about it and will have something to show in another year.

He has a large C-1, C-19 nursery for use on the greens of the new course he is building.

When the tees, collars and approaches have the same excellence as the greens, then the Woodmont fairway improvement program will start in earnest. Some work has been done but more experience needs to be gained with newer, improved grasses before the final decisions can be made. The nurseries are helping to decide what grasses will be used on fairways in the future. To me, and I hope to GOLFDOM readers, Bob, his chmn., and his club symbolize the results attained from acting upon the best available information. Bob gives full credit to those who travel the "Orpheum Circuit" of the conferences, to universities, golf course suppliers, green sections and to his fellow supts.

We have been criticized for stressing nurseries. "A nursery isn't the same as a tee or a green that is in constant use" is constantly heard. That is true. The bacon in the refrigerator isn't the same as that cooked on your breakfast platter. But I doubt if anyone would advise dispensing with refrigerators. A nursery is a warehouse from which you can get replacement material on a moment's notice. It is also your private experiment station where you can make mistakes to learn how not to make mistakes.

* * *

Q. We have been building a new 18-hole course. We started in the spring of 1955 and hope to have it completed this year. However we have a major problem at this time and would like your comments. In building our

greens we used a substantial base of sand and gravel and then a fill of mulched sand and earth which at the time we figured would be satisfactory. Now we find the mixture had quite a percentage of clay. Our greens are fairly hard and in some places are cracking open. (N. Y.)

A. You are up against a serious problem. Before I can reply helpfully I should know the stage of construction. Have the greens been planted? Send a pint of representative soil sample directly to me at Box 177, College Park, Md. in a polyethylene bag, dropped inside a cloth bag, tied and tagged for Parcel Post, Special Delivery. Meanwhile send me details of how the sand and soil were mixed and in what proportions. With the sample and information I will be better able to advise you.

Q. (1) Can bent grass be overseeded with more of the same strain of bent? If so, what time of the year is the best. At what rate would you overseed? The reason I ask is that several of our greens are becoming thin but not spotty enough for resodding.

(2) Another situation that has arisen is this: There are plans to build a new green right between two large maple trees, about 120 ft. apart. This area is shaded almost all of the time. Would Emerald Zoysia be a good grass to put on that green? (Ky.)

(1) Yes, bent greens can be overseeded with either the same kind of bent or a better one. Early fall is best for doing this. Thorough spiking will help to lodge the seeds in the holes for better chance to grow. My choice for overseeding as soon as the seed is available is Penn-cross bent seed. There should be some available this fall.

(2) Maple trees are serious competitors of bentgrass. The choice of location is not best for the grass but with extra funds and help to meet the situation you should be able to have a fair to good bent green.

Emerald Zoysia would not be my choice in this location. I would choose Penn-cross bent seed as most likely to adapt itself to the situation.

To be successful, it will be necessary to provide the very best in drainage, depth of soil, barriers to keep tree roots out and in skilled maintenance.

Q. Is it ever beneficial to leave clippings on the putting greens? Would there be any possibility of these clippings growing if the green was just topdressed? I am having a discussion of the second question and don't believe it possible. (Wis.)

A. There is one time when it is beneficial to leave clippings on the greens. That is when they are being mowed for the first time after stolonizing, before the green is put into play. Thin and bare spots are covered with the rather long cuttings, many of which have joints and will grow if they are topdressed and kept moist.

I believe your question referred to greens already in play. Leaving clippings here would not be beneficial. The possibility of any of

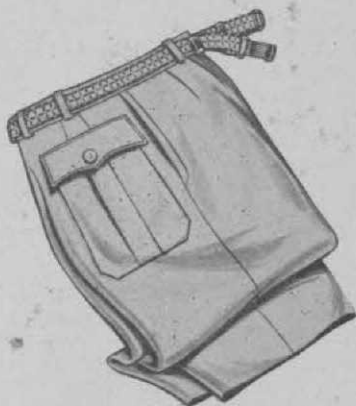
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the clippings from normal mowing taking roots and growing is extremely slight.

Clippings taken following aerifying and verticutting often are carefully used as planting material because they contain a good percentage of stolons which will grow when top-dressed and kept moist. Clippings left on the green could be a factor in encouraging diseases. Removing them is one step in sanitation.

Q. We have put in nine grass greens this Spring planted with C1 and C19 Stolons. Things are going reasonably well. We would like to get a comprehensive book on the care and maintenance of greens. If you will recommend where to get a book on grass greens we will appreciate it very much. We have followed your articles in GOLFDOM with great interest for some time (Minn.)

A. We hope you will be pleased with the C1-C19 combination greens. We can't help but add this bit of advice: Feed them well, cut them close and often, and let them get good and dry occasionally.

The best book we know of on care and maintenance of greens is H. B. Musser's Turf Management, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 330 W. 42nd St., New York 18.

You might ask West Point Products Corp., West Point, Pa., for its bulletin, "Superior

Putting Greens," published a short time ago.

Q. Is the use of sulfur water harmful to greens? If not, is it advisable to use this water in preference to creek or river water? (Ohio.)

A. The answer is dependent upon the percent of sulfur in the water. Sulfur is a necessary element for growing plants but, like many other things, an excess can be toxic. Sulfur tends to develop an acid condition in the soil which easily can be corrected with lime. An analysis of the water will help to determine if the sulfur would be toxic based upon the quantity you expect to use. I cannot say if the sulfur water would be preferable to creek or river water because I know nothing about the quality of water from any of the sources you mention.

Q. Can you advise as to the best practice in this latitude for getting grass greens through long, cold winters with the least damage? For several years our greens have been covered during winter with brush. This spring we had a lot of trouble with snow-mold. How can this be avoided? (S. D.)

A. Where snowmold is a problem the first step is to treat the greens in late fall with mercury fungicides. Follow manufacturer's directions. Also consider the use of a grass known to be resistant to snowmold. Congressional (C-19) creeping bent has shown a high degree of resistance in tests in the U. S. and Canada.