

Grau's Answers to Turfgrass Question

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



The Questions: (a) Where can I get good training in greenkeeping?
(b) Is it a good job today?
(Pa.)

These two questions, from a 19-year old, came to me through GOLFDOM as my preparations were being made to conduct the panel on "Training New Men" at the

**Prepare For
Your Career
in Turfgrass
Management**

GCSA's 28th National Turfgrass Conference in Louisville. This young man's questions came at a time when attention of the turf world was being focused on the answers at Louisville.

The answers are condensed from the fine papers presented by Rex McMorris, National Golf Foundation; Ted Woerhle, Beverly CC, Chicago; Andrew Bertoni, Meadowbrook CC, Northville, Michigan; and Prof. H. B. Musser of Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.:

Since you are a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania your school for studying Turfgrass Management is Penn State. Enclosed, you will find a leaflet, entitled: "Prepare For Your Career In Turfgrass Management." It will give you detailed and complete information on enrolling in the new Winter Course which consists of four 8-week terms of instruction at Penn State. This course is designed to give you the training needed to become a supt. But it will not train you to be a course supt. That part is up to you. If you aspire to be a supt. you will be required to spend at least a year in practical training under a man who is an expert in turf

management. This should be one of the most interesting phases of your preparation. Assuming that you apply yourself to your studies and receive a certificate, it still will be very important that you pass your practical training as an assistant so that you can be recommended to take a position as supt. at any club in the country. It is possible that you may wish to take the 4-year course at Penn State so that, in the future, you will be eligible to study further for an advanced degree. There are several supts. who hold the M. Sc. (Master of Science) degree.

Other universities also offer four-year courses in Turfgrass Management. One that we recommend highly is Purdue. There are others, all very good, but these two have concentrated on turfgrass management and they have excellent research facilities where it may be possible to earn while you learn by working on the turf plots.

Now for the second question which you ask: "Is it a good job today?" What you ask directly is "What is likely to be my future in this work?"

Young man, with your interest and with a sincere desire to learn and apply yourself, I want to tell you that this field of turfgrass management has virtually unlimited possibilities. If you have imagination, desire to advance, ability to get along with people and technical proficiency, your future is assured. If you desire to become a supt. don't start unless your ambition is to learn everything there is to know in the field. Everyone needs a goal — make that one yours.

A good job? Young man, it is one of the most promising professions in the country

today. You can help to make it even greater and more profitable for those who will come after you if you will set and adhere to only highest possible standards. It is a profession which carries dignity, stature and responsibility. It is a profession which finally is being recognized as the true source of practical information for the millions of people who want the best there is in turf quality for their lawns, sports fields, cemeteries and parks. In short, the supts. and their courses are the turfgrass "proving grounds" of the nation. With the recognition that more people are interested in good turf than in any other agricultural enterprise, and that turf is big business, there is growing demand for young men who have been trained in this specialized industry.

It could happen, when you complete your training, that the salary offered you by a club may be insufficient to justify the time, energy and money you have invested in your chosen profession. This is a decision that golf course management must make — and soon!

A well-trained golf course supt. is the greatest asset a club can have. The shortage of them is acute and it will get worse before it improves. Mistakes are very costly. The elevation of a tractor driver to the position of supt. does little or nothing to reduce the possibility of errors in management. If this is what clubs prefer to do, you will have ample opportunities to step into positions with parks, highways, cemeteries, estates and airfields. In addition, industry is absorbing greater numbers of young men trained in turfgrass management to supervise test plots. Selling of turfgrass supplies and equipment is being entrusted more and more to turf specialists.

Yes, you have an excellent chance for a good future in some phase of turfgrass work. As a course supt. you can expect to advance faster and more soundly as a member of the Supts. Assn. of America. Many members refer to it as the "National". I recommend that you apply for membership in the National at your earliest opportunity after becoming eligible. Eligibility requirements can be obtained from GCSA Secretary, Agar Brown, Box 106, St. Charles, Ill.

One more suggestion and the rest will be up to you. Grasp every opportunity to learn to write and speak the English language well. As a supt. you will be working with some of the ablest of men — your

Turfgrass Meetings

- Mar. 4-6 — Midwest Turf Conference, Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind.
- Mar. 11-13 — Iowa Turfgrass Short Course, Memorial Union, Iowa State College, Ames.
- Mar. 18-19 — School of Soils, Fertilization, Maintenance Conference, Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph.
- Apr. 12 — Truro Turfgrass Conference, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Truro, N.S.

green chmn. and club officers. Look upon the chmn. as your friend and remember that you will command his respect in direct proportion to your ability to handle men, money and machines, the Big Three in management. Your preparation of budgets, your reports to him, your aptitude for directing men, your knowledge of things technical, your business and executive ability — these are the things that make successful supts. Almost without exception, the basis for success will be your mastery of the English language.

At this point there is only one more question that belongs in this month's Q & A Department. It is the result of discussions at Louisville with supts., green chmn., panel members and others.

Q: What can golf clubs do now to assure themselves of well-trained supts. in the future?

A: The very first thing to do is to provide in the course budget for an "Assistant to the Supt." Club officers and committee chmn. are constantly changing and incumbents could perform a great service to their clubs by taking steps to train assistants who will be fully prepared to step into responsible supt. jobs when openings occur.

The next step is for clubs to provide salary and other benefits that will give proper dignity and stature to the profession. The third step is to work closely with the GCSA in the Scholarship Plan through which many future supts. will be developed. It is probably not presumptuous to say that many clubs may even want to provide in their budgets for "GCSA Scholarships".

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