
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.



LAST month we talked about training men and about the new Turfgrass Short Course at Penn State which is to be activated this fall. It seems important now to examine another phase of teaching in the turfgrass field — that of extension service. In effect, it is the university extended to the field. It is wholly tax supported, operating statewide in county units with administrative heads located at the university. The system exists for the purpose of assisting taxpayers to do a better job of farming, manufacturing or home making. Originally it was for the benefit of the farmers. Today the base has been broadened to include many other essential activities.

**Get Acquainted
with Your
County Agent**

The county agent is the county-based representative of the university or the college. He may or may not have an assistant but usually he has a home demonstration agent (a woman) working in the same office. It is the policy of extension people to work with groups, insofar as possible, and to help people help themselves.

County agents have available to them a staff of extension specialists who come into the county by appointment to assist with group meetings, inspections and recommendations on problem areas, radio and television programs and many other types of educational activities. At no time is there a charge of any kind to the taxpayers. Salaries, travel and living expenses and cost of reports — all are paid out of the budget of the state extension service. Some of the county office expenses may be borne by the county committee out of county funds.

Here is a service that is unique. It is given without thought of reward or recompense. The satisfaction comes from seeing improvements made as the result of recommendations.

County agents used to be known only for their work with farmers. Today many of them are intimately associated with "Urbiculture" or gardening in the suburbs where once grew corn, wheat and hay. Where there once were fields of hay there are now parks and lawns. Some agents report that over 60 per cent of their requests for assistance come from folks with lawns. Some states have an extension specialist who works mainly with turf with and through the county agent. It is quite true that many agents know very little about turf. There are also many who do. All of them have specialists in various fields to call upon when the need arises.

County Agents Available

Most important is the fact that the county agent stands ready to help those who ask for advice and assistance. He does not offer his services — he is simply available. He often helps groups organize so that he can most effectively bring information to them as a group.

When I started as extension specialist at Penn State in 1935, Charles Hallowell was county agent in Philadelphia County. Henry Eby was located in Allegheny County. These two men called on me frequently to speak at meetings of course supts., garden clubs, service clubs, gardeners, landscapers and many others. Gradually all 66 county agents developed an interest in turf, some more than others, naturally. These agents were the main factors in organizing turfgrass Assns. The first such

group was the Pocono Turfgrass Assn.; others followed.

In a future issue of GOLFDOM we shall discuss the role of extension specialists in different fields and how they fit into the turfgrass picture. For the present, it has been my aim to tell, very briefly, how a county agent can be of great assistance to turfgrass groups if he is asked and is given a chance. He really does not have to know anything about turf — that he can learn. What he has is an office, a thorough knowledge of people and the ability to help people help themselves.

If you don't know your county agent take time to find out who he is, then go see him and invite him to come to the next meeting. He is a "good guy" to know.

Topdressing for Greens

Q. I'd like information about topdressing for greens. At our club we have a problem in that any topdressing we get contains the seeds of various types of weeds. Our club is not big enough to treat the soil before it is applied because of the expense involved. Is it possible to purchase soil which has been treated? (Me.)

A. It is my opinion that by the time you locate and purchase soil that has been treated for weed seeds, you will have spent more money than you would if you had treated your own soil in the first place.

There are two ways in which you can treat your soil at rather low expense. First, to each cu. yd. of moist topdressing add 13 lbs. of granular calcium cyanamid and mix them thoroughly. Let them stand for two or three months and you will find that practically all of the weed seeds have been destroyed.

Another way is to fit up a bin and treat the soil in the bin with Dowfume MC-2. Complete directions can be obtained from your local course supply house. By treating your own soil you will have the kind of topdressing you want. You will be sure it has no weed seeds and the expense actually will be less than if you purchased soil already treated.

Would Better Himself

Q. I am employed as Greenkeeper's helper at the X X X Club in N. H. I have worked here three years. I worked for two years at the X X X Club in N. H. I want to go further in this work, but I am at a disadvantage because I do not have either a high school or college education. Are there Correspondence Courses I can study at home to get a high school diploma? Do you consider this a feasible plan?

If so, what subjects should I take for entrance at a college that offers training for a turf manager? I realize that to qualify for a full four years of college I should have the required four years of high school. My idea is that if I can study at home I may be eli-

gible to enter the university to take some courses in turf management. The two courses where I have worked have given me the necessary experience to continue in this work. (N. H.)

A. With your experience and desire and excellent command of the English language, as shown in your letter, I believe that there may be a possibility that a high school diploma could be waived if you are able to pass a college entrance exam.

There are two possibilities open to you and one is nearby at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. I suggest that you write to Dr. Eliot Roberts and get his advice.

The other possibility is Pennsylvania State University, where, starting this fall, there will be offered four eight-week terms of instruction in Turfgrass Management. The prospectus states that high school graduates 16 years of age or over are eligible for enrollment. Here again, I would make application for the course, stating experience and asking for permission to take a college entrance examination so that you might possibly take the course even without a high school diploma. This is somewhat irregular but I believe it would pay you to make application. It is possible that you could take some summer courses at some school near you that would enable you to get a high school diploma or the equivalent.

You Pronounce It

Q. What place, if any, does Mondo grass, (*Ophiopogon japonicus*) have for course use in southern Wisconsin? (Wis.)

A. None that I can think of.

Asks Soil Check

Q. Please analyze this dirt for me. Is it good topsoil? I have been using it on my greens and it is very expensive. Would appreciate answer. (Ohio)

A. I see no need for running an analysis on the soil because I do not believe it is the right soil for you to use on your greens. It is very high in silt (the fine, smooth, flour-like grey particles) which tends to pack tightly. It has low sand content.

I suggest that you locate a good grade of clay subsoil (subsoil has fewer weed seeds) from some of your Cincinnati hills. Find a good grade of coarse concrete sand and some peat and make a mixture such as this:

- 75 per cent sand (7½ parts by volume)
- 15 per cent clay soil (1½ parts by volume)
- 10 per cent peat (1 part by volume)

When you have this mixture made up put a cupful in a strong plastic bag (polyethylene), pack in a strong pasteboard box and mail it to me at PO Box 177, College Park, Md., for an examination.

Clover in the Bent

Q. We are having trouble with clover in our bent greens. Would you be so kind as to write us a letter or send some information on this matter? (Tenn.)

(Continued on page 93)