

# Roundup

## Quality Has New Meaning in Turfgrass Picture

By FRED V. GRAU

**T**OPDRESSING is coming into fashion.

Since we can sterilize it, we see the value of using it on greens. Each successive layer of sterilized topdressing further buries any weedseeds that are present, making it more difficult for them to germinate and grow. In addition, topdressing is an excellent carrier for fertilizer and it also does well with insecticides and fungicides. But we re-emphasize this point: Topdressing must be sterilized. As many of us know, Dr. DeFrance of the University of Rhode Island has pointed out that 13 lbs. of cyanamid per cu. yd. of topdressing, allowed to "cure" for several months, gives us virtually weed-free material. The same undoubtedly applies to methyl bromide and perhaps other soil sterilants that are coming on the market.

Two very important advances have taken place in the turfgrass field. They are: (1) Sterilization to destroy all unwanted vegetation that might compete with desired grass that has been selected for planting; and (2) Recognition that some grass types are far more wear resistant, drought tolerant and rapid healing than others.

The word, quality, no longer applies just to putting greens but to all turfgrass. First Merion, then Meyer zoysia, Emerald zoysia, the improved Bermudas and Penn-cross bent and Penn-cross fescue have made the American public turf quality conscious. These are just a start in the improved strains that may be expected.

### Weed Control

We have a better grasp today of the principles of weed control than ever before. Practically all of us believe that good grasses, properly fertilized, are the best weed control device known. But that doesn't mean we have licked the problem of getting rid of weeds. A large portion of the Q and A dept. I run in COLFDOM is devoted to queries on weeds, if the foregoing statement must be justified.



Lawn edging provides excellent vegetative planting material. This is improved zoysia at Grau's home.



Sod on left cut 2-ins. thick is heavy to handle, breaks easily, knits to seedbed slowly. Half-inch sod on right rolls, handles easily and will knit to seedbed quickly. This saves on water, maintenance.



Tree feeding reveals starved turf. Trees, grass can be grown together if right grasses are fertilized adequately and trees are fed.

Chickweed, goosegrass, crabgrass, knotweed and clover still plague us but we're learning how to cope with them. At this time, I think it only proper to point to the efforts of John Gallagher of the American Chemical Paint Co., who has done an outstanding job of correlating existing knowledge of weed control and plans to produce it in a booklet soon to be published.

Early last year at a Mid-Atlantic GCSA meeting I told my audience that greens that have been rebuilt by supts. probably will be free of trouble as long as they are used. The mistakes that are originally built into greens are quickly discovered by the supt. who often must rebuild them within a year or two at great expense. In some cases the supts. have done such excellent rebuilding jobs that they have been asked to design new greens or even to take part in the complete design of new courses. This quite naturally leads to the conclusion that closer coordination in course construction between golf architects and the GCSA would result in future courses that will be easier to maintain and give greater satisfaction to players at lower cost.

### New Demand for Service

Acquisition of farm land for housing development has greatly increased the work and the need of our Agricultural Experiment Stations. A large percentage of requests to County Agents for assistance now comes from home owners, and these in turn are passed on to the Extension Services. A heavy demand for extension specialists in agronomy, horticulture and pathology has thus been created, so much so that states and universities are putting men on full time Turf Extension. It has been our observation that supts., more than ever before, are working closely with County Agents and Extension Specialists not only in sharing their experiences, but in helping to organize and develop turf associations which provide educational material and methods for those not connected with golf.

Substantial grants of money by several commercial concerns have aided turf studies at a number of experiment stations. Research within industry also has been an important factor. Industry distribution of informational literature fills a great need, supplementing the limited distribution of conference proceedings and similar educational material.

### Bermuda Fairways

It has been a source of considerable pleasure to see gradual acceptance of Bermudagrass on course fairways and to see this movement steadily marching northward. Today we have solid tees and fairways of Bermuda in Philadelphia, the Mid-Atlantic area, Kansas City and St. Louis. The northward march of Bermuda has matched the development of Merion in the bluegrass regions so that the two have met and are overlapping. This is a great thing because Bermuda is one of those grasses that is extremely drought resistant, can utilize the best possible fairway playing surfaces when properly managed.

This subject has been argued for years in the Mid-Atlantic GCSA. Emphasis now is on "How soon can we get Bermuda fairways?" — not on "How can we get rid of the blankety-blank stuff?" With the development of improved planting machines, and with lower cost of planting stock, the development of solid Bermuda fairways will go forward more rapidly.

### Winter Schools

Winter schools at Penn State and Massachusetts University have been publicized before, but we would like to mention them again. For brochures for Pennsylvania State University, write to Prof. H. B. Musser and for Massachusetts University, write to Dr. Eliot C. Roberts; or if you choose, drop a line to Grau's Q. and A., c/o GOLFDOM and brochures will be mailed you. These are important cogs in the wheel of training new men. They are practical training schools and not designed to turn out professional men such as the four-year course at Penn State, Purdue and other schools. We were pleased to see the development in this direction at the University of Florida at Gainesville, where Dr. Gene Nutter is doing such a tremendous job in research and training.

While we're on this subject, we would like to express good wishes for a successful turf program to Dr. Louis N. Wise at the Mississippi State College at Starkville. Dr. Wise runs the first successful and only seed training school of its kind in the world. We saw him again at Beltsville and at Gainesville, Fla. where he was picking up information so as to develop a comprehensive program in turf research for Mississippi. Another outstanding agronomist who has initiated a full-scale turfgrass program is Dr. Roy Blaser at V.P.I., Blacksburg, Va. Their first turf field day was held in July, 1957. The new golf course is their "proving grounds."

Pro. Hugh Knowles and Dr. LeBeau at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, and others are starting turf programs. A special mention is in order for C. E. (Robbie) Robinson of the Royal Canadian Golf Association for his untiring efforts in promoting turfgrass work.

Poa annua still is one of the most popular subjects for discussion at supts. conferences and local meetings across the country. There is a steady increase of those who believe that poa annua can be a valuable turfgrass when used as a winter grass in combination with a strong growing warm season grass.

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### Sargent Heads PGA

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will be played. In 1958 the new Colorado section, which includes part of Wyoming, will play its first championship.

Robert Goldwater, Phoenix department store owner and amateur golf association official, was elected PGA advisory committee chmn., succeeding the late John Jay Hopkins. Robert Leacox of Kansas City was elected advisory committee vice-chmn. and Harry Radix, Chicago, was reelected sec. Tom Lanphier, Jr., San Diego and B. C. Gould, Detroit, were brought onto the advisory committee.

It was made plain at Long Beach that the advisory committee in the future would have an informed and active function in keeping with its name. Advisory committee members have been concerned about the controversial publicity involving the tournament bureau and the failure of the PGA to get effective publicity on the service of club professionals to golfers. There committee members also have been embarrassed about being kept in the dark on deals that, according to some informed PGA men, had the association being led into the role of babes in the woods.

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Among these are the folks at U.C.L.A., ie, Stoutemyer Youngner, who write favorably of Bermuda-poa associations. Another is Jim Haines at Denver who has Washington bent greens which fill with poa in the fall when the bent goes dormant. During our recent visit in Canada we saw another set of perfect Washington greens managed by John Steel at St. Charles CC in Winnipeg. Here, too, poa is the perfect winter companion to Washington bent. It would be wrong, and could be disastrous, to attempt to eliminate poa in these and many other cases. There is considerable merit in understanding poa and in learning to live with it.

Research on chemicals to destroy poa annua without injuring the good turfgrasses has not yet come up with the answer, even though there are some promising leads. It can be stated rather conclusively that the stronger strains of grasses, plus adequate fertilization, with minimum irrigation consistent with good playing turf, is still a very excellent control for poa annua.

#### Unintentional Omissions

We know that we have mentioned only a few of the outstanding people and outstanding events of the year. For the omissions we have made, we ask your indulgence. It is impossible to mention everyone who is playing an important role in developments in the turfgrass world.

Before we end this Roundup, however, we would like to suggest that each of you go to your GOLFDOM file and read the 1956 Roundup in the October, 1956 and January, 1957 issues. Much of what we said then we would like to repeat, but to save space and your time and our publisher's money, we urge you to re-read the 1956 Roundup. It will be worth your time and effort.

#### Use More Fertilizer

In summary, we'd like to leave just one or two thoughts with you. For better turf, learn to use more fertilizer and less water. Test the new grasses side by side in your nursery to find out which one you are going to use to replace the present unsatisfactory turf. Test also the new tools and the new fertilizers side by side in your nursery so that you will know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the ones that will fit best into your management program. Keep up your visits to other golf clubs. Continue to attend educational conferences. Take notes and don't be afraid to share your experiences with others. Write reports. If each supt. would help the members of his club to have better lawns, what a change there would be in the lawns of the country. There are many free services to turf through Extension Service. See and learn to know your County Agent. Keep your membership informed of what you are doing for them and keep in touch with GOLFDOM for your reference list of turfgrass publications for your library. When the pinch on water really comes, don't get caught with a bunch of succulent turf.