

Grau's Answers to Turf Questions



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.

Quo Vadis is a term familiar to every first-year Latin student. It is a term that suddenly has assumed great significance in the turfgrass profession. It will be a big factor in committee deliberations. Several translations are possible. "Whither goest thou?" is the classic interpretation. We might ask the question, "What goal have you established?" or "What level of quality do you want?"

It was evident at the GCSA conference in Washington, D. C. that often there exists a wide discrepancy between the quality of the turf that the supt. tries to provide, on the basis of what he believes club members want, and the funds that are provided for the purpose. The most common source of discontent seemed to be the demand for "economy" on the course to permit the expenditure of large sums in the clubhouse.

This seems to be the right place and the right time for a frank statement. The members of a club have a perfect right to demand any given level of quality in any department of the club if they're willing to pay for it — who shall say nay? If they are perfectly content with mediocre turf why shouldn't they have it?

But — and this is important — the supt. has an equal right to request, in writing, a statement of the level of quality that is desired. It is senseless for the supt. to eat his heart out — trying to provide opti-

mum quality when the budget and members ask only minimum quality. A cut in the budget may simply be another way of telling the supt. that they really do not care too much if the greens go to pot. If the members say, "We want nothing but the best," the supt. then has a free hand to draw up a budget that will provide optimum quality.

In developing a budget the supt. must provide unerringly for those items which are designed to produce the highest quality in turf. He must know costs and must be prepared to defend the selection of items which he knows will aid him most in achieving the goal agreed upon. Some items may be unfamiliar to committee members. Education of these people then becomes the first order of business. Some supts. are disheartened when the material which they have chosen to aid them in achieving desired quality is not allowed and they are told to buy a "cheaper" material which the supt. knows will ultimately be more costly to the club. The committee has a perfect right to enforce such a demand upon the supt. The supt. has an equal right to set forth in writing all facts at his command to prove that his choice would be the wise one.

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Q. Kindly advise what is the best application on greens containing Astoria colonial and seaside bent for removal of chickweed which is coming in more heavily all the time.

(New York)

A. I would recommend use of lead arsenate which can be a very effective material against chickweed in mixed bent greens. Lead arsenate is safe and, if used at the rate of 10 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. once a year, either spring or fall, should get rid of chickweed gradually and safely.

If there are stubborn spots that you'd like to get rid of quickly, dust them with calcium arsenate. This material is a little more active than lead arsenate and will cause chickweed to disappear more rapidly. But it also does a little more damage to the grass if used too heavily.

Control of disease is very important in keeping the turf healthy and resistant to invasion of weeds. Your fertilization program also is extremely important as well as the irrigation. Well fed turf, with minimum irrigation, is a good defense against weed invasion.

Q. I am supt. at a club in Washington. We have a problem involving one of our greens in that the poa annua type grass does not survive summer heat and fungus damage.

We are interested in obtaining a type of bent which will be most adaptable to our climate and conditions. Our plan is to kill all existing plant life, spike as much as 20 times and then topdress and replant with a suitable strain of