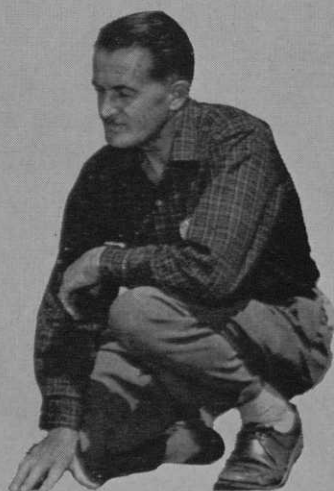


Grau's Answers to Turf Questions

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.



A Study of the Past Makes a Good Beginning

At the start of a new year we are filled with hope and determination. We hope that we will not have so much difficulty

because of fickle, changeable Nature. We are determined to do a better job in our dealings with others and with the material things with which we work.

GOLFDOM has established a fine tradition in publishing its Planning Issue in October of each year. Through the eyes and ears of many people we get to review the past year in order to have a sounder basis for planning the activities of the year ahead. Now, when we come to the brink of a new season, all facilities should be in tiptop shape, ready to go into action with the first breath of spring. (Year 'round clubs in the South, please ignore.)

Last summer when the rains drowned a lot of turf there was not enough good sod for immediate replacement. Has the nursery area been enlarged and has it been planted to the very best improved grasses available?

Areas on greens that held water too long were badly in need of drainage. Have these spots been repaired? Tile or a dry well may save the turf this summer until the green can be rebuilt.

Goosegrass was prevalent on many greens in late summer. We have observed that many samples of topdressing, when planted in a flat, develop solid stands of goosegrass. Have you run a flat test of your topdressing to see if it is weedfree? We would advise not to topdress rather than to plant the greens to weeds. Sterilization of soil is neither costly nor difficult. If you use heat to sterilize, be sure to add nitrogen fertilizer after sterilizing.

Fred V. Grau replies to R. R. Bond relative to Bond's statement on page 58 of GOLFDOM for October, 1958.

• "The tendency for bent greens to become thin during midsummer is not confined to any one strain of bent. It is more the result of management rather than a characteristic of the strain of grass. Where I have observed thinning of bent greens during summer's heat I also have detected signs of malnutrition. Bent greens which have had good management and a steady uniform supply of nutrients have not been plagued by summer thinning.

"Old Orchard is one of the leading superior vegetated bents which we are happy to recommend highly. It was wholly unintentional, and deeply regretted, that the Q & A in GOLFDOM, Sept. 1958 (page 48) gave the impression that there was a weakness in the grass. I was in error in my choice of words. It was intended to point out that a superior grass, such as Old Orchard bent, may become thin during the summer if management fails to meet its requirements. This holds true with all good grasses."



View of large crowd that attended 13th turf conference at Texas A&M College in December. Registration totalled 187. C. B. Campbell is pres. of Texas Turfgrass Assn.

The disappearance of poa annua from fairways always is disappointing, but it is very difficult to explain to members. Many clubs in the transition zone now are planting perennial warm-season grasses to serve as a year-around base for golf shots and to provide the best in turf for the season when poa usually fades. Don't fail to investigate the possibilities of Bermuda and zoysia for tees and fairways even though you may think you are too far north. It will be well to remember, also, that the grasses that grow best in hot weather provide the most satisfactory turf for golf when most golf is played.

Attendance at turf conferences is very

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important in keeping posted on recent developments. Have you made your plans? Have you discussed it with your chmn.? Maybe he wants to go too. Most clubs furnish expenses for at least one major conference a year. Your membership in the organizations is the real key to continued progress. Have you paid your dues?

Some of the difficulties that occurred on greens last year could not possibly be ascribed to a single factor. Several powerful chemicals were applied, practically simultaneously, sometimes in desperation, in an effort to check diseases, to grow grass, to soften soil or to prevent weed invasion. It is suspected that some materials, in the presence of heat, moisture, and other chemicals, became antagonistic to grass with near fatal results. In such a situation it is obviously unfair to place the blame on any single factor. Those who have had such experiences may do well to take their problem to the experiment station with a request to determine compatibility of materials used.

Our last suggestion or reminder, even though many more might be cited, has to do with planning for the greatest possible comfort and convenience of the golfer. Apparently the golfer appreciates nothing quite so much as complete lack of interference with his game. This is possible only to a degree because maintenance must go on. Some of the developments that help the situation include more effective and longer-lasting fungicides. Heavier rates of fertilization with longer-lasting plant foods make it possible to irrigate less frequently. Sturdier grasses that can go longer without a drink, more efficient herbicides, improved soil-cultivating tools, more equipment to get the job done faster — all aid in reducing course operations during peak play. Above everything stands the factor of good management by a top-notch supt.