

Grau's Answers to Turf Questions

1960 Roundup—II

Even Better Turf Needs Proper Water, Nutrition

*Excesses in Any Direction
Undermine Conditions for Turf
Growth*



PENNCROSS creeping bent is established from seed produced by top-crossing three selected vegetative strains. Some reports tell of planting "Penncross stolons." This is not an approved practice and the resulting turf may or may not be Penncross.

The trend is definitely in the direction of greatly expanded use of Penncross seed. Many supts. report regular re-seeding of putting surfaces with Penncross seed in connection with thatching, aerating and topdressing. Most say that results are good. Some have completely changed to Penncross in a few years without renovation or interference with play.

In areas where bents do well under heavy play, Penncross is being used on well-groomed tees. Carl Sprenger of Congress Lake CC, Hartville, O., reports seeing fairways that had 10 per cent Penncross added to the seed mixture. With 1/2 inch mowing and other good care, he is enthusiastic about the results. Penncross still is on trial in many areas where it has not been in use long enough to warrant complete confidence. Low cost of establishment is in its favor.

Cohansey (C-7) creeping bent stolons are favored by many in the transition zone. "The light color reflects heat," say supts. Many feel that Cohansey is on the increase. For performance in extreme heat and under difficult conditions it is a hard grass to beat. Actually, Cohansey has sold itself by doing a good job. Objections to the yellow-green color generally vanish when supts. find that it comes through heat and humidity in excellent condition.

The C-1, C-19 mixture continues to be a favorite where management favors under-watering and generous feeding. But several reports tell of separation of the two strains with the inevitable patchiness and grain.

Old Orchard, Toronto and Pennlu are excellent vegetative bents, each of which has strong supporters. Zeke Avila, Hacienda, Calif., has shown that Pennlu can produce top-quality putting turf in spite of reports to the contrary. Many are the enthusiastic users of both Old Orchard and Toronto. It must be emphasized that each strain of creeping bent has its own individuality which the supt. must know and for which he must manage.



Charley Hadwick (front row, center), surrounded by his wife and daughter and members of the Heart of America GCSA and their wives, was the honored guest at a recent luncheon held upon the occasion of his retirement. Charley served as supt. at Jefferson City (Mo.) CC for 48 years and will remain as an advisor. During his time, sand greens were converted to bent, and the grounds at J. C. always were resplendent with the many flowers Hadwick loved to plant and tend. He and Mrs. Hadwick lived on the course for many years and raised a son and daughter there. His son, Joe, is supt. at Lincoln (Neb.) CC.

Overwatering Reduced

One of the most significant if gradual changes over the years has been in watering practices. The bad effects of overwatering have been recognized so that now the trend definitely is toward just enough water! Excess water, in addition to all its ill effects on turfgrasses, destroys the firmness of turf which the golfer so greatly desires for excellent playing quality. Professionals, I am sure, would much rather teach their pupils to play a shot from or to firm dry turf than from or to a soggy, sloppy piece of grass.

Where diseases are involved the trend is clear — in the direction of preventive schedules for the most part. Modern fungicides provide excellent protection so long as cultural conditions are favorable for growth. Under conditions of poor drainage, overwatering, compaction and excess thatch, even the best fungicides on the most rigid schedule will not suffice to control diseases and provide good turf. More and more we recognize the great importance of proper and adequate nutrition, improved grasses, and the ultimate in favorable growing conditions to give us sturdy healthy turf that requires a minimum of dosing with chemicals. The goal is to feed and water in such a way that the greatest possible intervals between doses may be achieved.

New Recognition of Potash

One outstanding trend in fertilizing turf is the recognition of the increasing need for continuous, adequate supplies of avail-

able potash. In a large measure the role of potash was ignored for many years. One has only to consult any elementary fertilizer text to gain an appreciation of the effects of potash in providing a plant with the means to resist disease, cold injury, heat injury, insects and abrasion.

Expanding use of Bermudagrass for many turfgrass areas has placed fresh emphasis on the great need for nitrogen. The high N requirement of Merion bluegrass has further accentuated this. Letters from supts. indicate enlightened thinking in expressing N requirements. Now they speak of using 300 to 400 pounds of N to the acre on fairways, rather than so many tons of fertilizer.

With the greater use of nitrogen, there has been detected in reports from supts. and in fertilizer surveys a distinct trend toward the use of materials with higher N content. Without reducing in any way the tonnage of sludges and meals used on turf, there has been a significant increase in acceptance of the high-N synthetic organics. Considering that these new fertilizer nitrogen compounds were virtually unknown 10 years ago, their wide use indicates a trend that merits close study.

The trend toward low-P mixed goods for turf continues. Excess phosphates have been detrimental to turf. One symptom is chlorosis, for the correction of which increasing quantities of iron sulfate are being applied. Arsenicals give much greater efficiency with low phosphates.

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Sand! Sand! Sand!

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with Jimmy Hines and Dawson in Palm Springs, will be mgr. The head pro, already on the scene, is tall Bob Frainey, a former winter PGA circuit rider out of Glen Oaks Club, Great Neck, Long Island. J. D. Kilpatrick, formerly of Thunderbird, is supt.

As for the course proper, it's a beauty.

For grooming, it's matched in San Diego County only by De Anza Desert CC at Borrego Springs. The Pauma Valley greens right now are said to be as good as De Anza's, but the fairways, planted only seven months ago, have yet to equal De Anza fairways.

Designed by famed course architect Robert Trent Jones, the course is dotted with trees and the aforementioned 157 traps, 87 near the greens. The course plays 7,000 yards from the back markets, 6,367 regular and 5,755 for women. Tees are as long as 100 yards.

Course rating hasn't been established but may be 72 regular to a whopping 75 for the championship layout. Par is 36-35-71.

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Light summer applications of liquid feeding are mentioned in several reports from supts., especially where the principal fertilization is done in spring and fall. Many of them speak of "controlled feeding" which can be interpreted in two ways; 1) frequent light applications of readily-available materials, or, 2) feeding two to four times a year with slowly-available materials which give controlled feeding through bacterial action.

Seedbed Feeding

Since DeFrance published results of high rates of fertilization in seedbeds before planting, there has been a gradual swing in that direction. The practice has not yet found full favor with architects and builders for the reason that any improvement in pre-planting practices tends to raise the initial cost. Supts. who have made tests endorse the practice.

At some new courses the supt. is hired by the club to supervise construction and then remain to maintain the course. This assures the club of having a course with low-cost maintenance built in, rather than a course with expensive built-in headaches. Some new courses, often without

proper supervision, are being built without drain tile simply to keep initial costs down with no thought being given to the spiralling costs of maintenance and future reconstruction.

Rebuilding is not unusual all across the country. Improper construction must be corrected before more good money is thrown after the bad already wasted in vain attempts to maintain turf under impossible soil and drainage conditions.

The Wage Situation

Salaries and wages still are too low but at least are trending upward. As much as they deserve a raise, most supts. do not complain about their own pay scale as much as they do about that of the working crew. Here is a sample from the east coast: ". . . wages are too low — we lose too many good men over the winter and new help has to be trained." In the West we hear: "Employee relations will never improve until the trend is to higher wages." From the Southwest: ". . . the faithful employees of the summer months deserve a year-around job and a chance to make a living so they don't have to starve during the winter." Another supt. in the Northeast says, "Shortage of qualified, competent supts. is resulting in a trend toward higher wages but too many incompetents are obtaining jobs because of the shortage."

There will be more golf cars, more rebuilding to accommodate them, more storage space needed, more prepared paths where cars may travel.

Course maintenance becomes more scientific and more predictable and dependable as the soil testing services of experiment stations, private laboratories and industrial concerns are utilized. Soil tests without proper interpretation are useless. Thus a premium is placed on recommendations that follow interpretations of tests.

Meetings Enlarged

There seems to be a swing toward inviting more professionals, mgrs. and green chmn. to be key speakers at supts' meetings. Not only is it good for public relations but it could be a welcome relief from technical subjects. The trend is warmly applauded and we hope it is expanded.

Woehrle Heads Midwest GCSA

Ted Woehrle, supt. of Beverly CC in Chicago, is the new pres. of the Midwest GCSA. Vps are Marvin Grueing and Ed Burke and sec.-treas. is Donald Gerber. Directors are Paul Voykin, Joe Canale, Bill Saielli, Don Stewart, John Ebel and Emil Cassier.