

GRAU'S ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

BY FRED V. GRAU



Give More Information with Your Questions

Many urgent questions are received by this department during the year. Some arrive with most of the essential information that makes it easy to write an answer. Others come with just a bare question and no supporting evidence on which an answer can be based. For example: "How much will it cost to rebuild our No. 4 green?" This is an unanswerable question. I've never seen their No. 4 green. The writer doesn't mention size, location, architect fees or anything else. It would take a considerable exchange of correspondence before a working basis could be established.

Here is another: "I have a disease problem and fungicides don't help. What shall I do?" Here again, there is no data to indicate what the problem may be. There is no mention of the kind of grass, soil mixture, feeding and watering program and the amount of play. After an exchange of correspondence it was determined that the two inches of thatch and mat that had developed was the determining factor. After that it was easy.

When Do We Water?

It is distressing to receive a question involving a controversy. For instance: "My green chairman says that greens should be watered all night every night. Our pro would like to see them watered once a week. I water them as they need it. What should we do?" This isn't an actual question but it is close to some I've had. It is a ticklish thing when you get placed square in the middle of a club argument.

Another difficult question is, "What fertilizer should we use on our fairways?" First, I do not know what kind of grass is on the fairways. The writer did not say

whether or not it was irrigated. No information was given on soil test results, pH level, type of soil, etc., etc.

A letter has to go back to the club trying to get enough essential data to answer the question intelligently.

Many times we write back to the questioner and request a 2-inch plug of the turf (at least 4 inches deep) so that soil texture, layering and thatch or mat can be evaluated.

We can only give prompt replies to questions that are accompanied by as much supporting information as possible, such as:

- Kind(s) of grass involved
- Age of the turf
- Irrigation procedures
- Feeding program
- Copy of recent soil test results
- Description of the problem

Erosion on Slopes

Q. We have a serious problem with erosion on our slopes. Someone told us about crownvetch and we would like to have more information. We planted creeping phlox and Vinca minor but they are not doing well since nearly all of the topsoil was graded off. The soil is very acid and we plan to add lime. If we plant crownvetch, will it crowd out the existing cover? Or should we remove everything that has been A. For all essential information on PENNGIFT crownvetch we refer you to a recent mimeographed release from the Agricultural Extension Service, Penn State University, by Dr. John C. Harper. Sources of seed and of crowns can be secured through Dr. Harper or through this department. Prices must be quoted directly by the suppliers.