GRAU'S ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

BY FRED V. GRAU

Love That Lime!

Many supts. have reason to hold hydrated lime in considerable regard since their experiences last summer. They either had not heard about the value of midsummer use of hydrated lime or they had forgotten about it. The whole chain of events was triggered by trouble on greens in the Omaha-Lincoln (Neb.) area. The diagnosis made by Dean Peterson, formerly of Omaha CC, was that a leafspot complex (Helminthosporium and Curvularia) was running rampant, apparently unchecked by varied treatments and the best of cultural care. Temperatures of 95 degs. F for weeks or more, plus high humidity in the micro-climate due to "cooling" with water, created conditions favorable to the "melting or wearing out" of the turf. One complaint was that "the grass won't grow".

My suggestion was: "½ to 1 lb. hydrated lime plus two lbs. of powdered insoluble nitrogen material to 1,000 sq. ft." Sprayers went into action at once and results were dramatic. Even with continued ugly heat the disease complex stopped and grass started to grow. To date there has been nothing but sighs of relief that wholesale destruction of grass was averted. No unfavorable results have been reported except where the lime dosage exceeded the recommended rate.

Golfdom's Q & A department has referred previously to the beneficial effects of hydrated lime during unfavorable weather when fungi and algae are having a "field day". At no time has it been referred to as a "fungicide". At best, it creates conditions in which any good fungicide can be more effective.

Water — Too Much and Not Enough

As the population increases cities expand, industry grows, and fresh water is in ever greater demand. There is a growing problem of providing adequate water for irrigating golf courses. The situation will become more and more troublesome.

In the face of low rainfall and dwindling water supplies it is distressing to see course turf over-irrigated to the point of severe damage to turf. Not only is precious water being wasted but future heavy repair costs are being incurred. Already many courses have faced replanting of greens and fairways which, if the truth were known, suffered severe losses partly because the turf was predisposed to damage by overwatering.

Putting greens of hybrid Bermudagrasses certainly do not need to be watered every night. Bermudagrass fairways can provide excellent playable turf with far less water than many of them receive. Water is used profusely in the effort to keep grass green. It is often forgotten that sturdy grasses such as Bermuda and Zoysia can remain green for weeks with no irrigation if they are adequately supplied with nitrogen. Bluegrass comes in this same category. Often it is said that "we can't afford to fertilize" but there seems to be no limit on the amount of water used.

Water with inadequate nitrogen tends to increase weed population. We have seen many fairways that should be solid bluegrass. With more than enough water and less than enough nitrogen the "turf" is made up of knotweed, poa and clover for the most part.

Potash for Healthier Turf

Regular periodic applications of sulfate of potash are becoming the rule on the

This is the second of two annual round-up articles by Fred V. Grau. The first appeared in October Golfdom (page 72).