



GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

BY FRED V. GRAU

Need for Understanding

• For me this new year brings a new beginning — this time in a free and independent position. All ties with industry have been severed. All, that is, except for the Penngift crownvetch business that Mrs. Grau and I have developed. Contacts will be maintained with the turfgrass industry thru travel, correspondence and consultation. There will be opportunities for occasional consulting with those who feel I can help them. Speaking engagements with GCSA sponsored groups can be arranged on a travel-cost basis — no fee. My mail address will remain unchanged — College Park, Maryland 20740. Correspondence on turfgrass problems thru GOLFDOM Q & A will continue to be welcomed. •

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Thirty-eight years of intimate association with every phase of the turf industry makes it clear that all of us need to develop to the utmost an understanding of principles which underly thought and action. Time and time again we have heard it explained that, in turf, there is no cut-and-dried, easy formula for success. Success comes only when principles are understood and intelligently applied to the problem at hand.

One of the most common illustrations of the need for understanding principles occurs in the blending of ingredients for a putting green top-mix. With few exceptions, the questioner wants a ready-made answer as to how much of each

material he should use. To accomplish this with chances for a high degree of success one must know how soil fractions (clay, silt, sands) are put together in the site soil; how the available sand will act; how the characteristics of the organic material will modify the mixture; and, finally, how the final mixture will hold nutrients, allow moisture to percolate and air to be exchanged.

All this demands an intimate knowledge and understanding of the physical and chemical properties of soils. Many older men in the profession may not have had the chance to study in this field although the younger men have that chance. It is to the credit of older supts. that they have done such an outstanding job of learning by doing and by asking questions. It behooves us to study carefully their successes and their failures so that those who have the advantage of technical training may better understand the underlying principles.

Do we understand the other fellow's point of view? The green chairman views the course maintenance operation with a certain set of values in mind. To know what these values are and how they were developed may become very important to the supt. Some time spent in looking into the background of the chairman, his

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likes and dislikes, his game, etc. and other personal facets may pay off handsomely. Everyone likes to be understood and appreciated.

Others who are seen frequently by the supt. are salesmen. They have their own points of view which may not be fully appreciated by the supt. Their basic function is to sell but they must be capable of serving in an educational capacity. In a large measure, salesmen in the turf-grass industry have become an extension of the extension services of the universities. The difference is that the college specialist has nothing to sell but information and service. By appreciating the point of view of the educated salesman, the supt. can gain valuable knowledge concerning products and technics.

Do we understand the potential dangers of chemicals that we handle frequently as a matter of course? I'm sure that we read the labels and note whether or not the material is poisonous or dangerous, but do we really fully appreciate the warnings? The National Safety Council reports these grim statistics for the period 1946 to 1960: a total of 524 deaths; due to arsenic 6; cyanide 41; chlorinated hydrocarbons 85 (35 for DDT); fluorides 26; nicotine 50; organic phosphates 105 (73 for parathion); phosphorus and P-compounds 211 (201 for rat poisons).

The turfgrass industry can gratefully note that no fatalities were recorded for mercury and mercury products which are used in large quantities for disease control.

Seeks Dense Turf

Q. We seeded our new greens to a 50-50 mixture of Seaside and Colonial bent at 2 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft. We can't seem to get the turf to fill in and make a dense putting surface. What do you suggest? (Ohio)

A. You have furnished no information on fertilization. It is possible that the grass is hungry for nitrogen. Another factor is your choice of grasses. Colonial bent is a bunch-type grass that does not spread to form dense turf as creeping bents do.

My suggestion is to treat these greens with the hydroseeding technic is to use one-half pound of Penncross seed to 1,000 sq. ft. and the suggested fertilizer. Repeat two weeks



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