



GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

By FRED V. GRAU

Golf course architects and golf superintendents have made good use of improved turfgrasses. Some new courses have been planted entirely with recently-released improved grasses, both vegetative and seeded.

Several states have kept pace with progress by developing regulations for CERTIFICATION or seeds, sod, sprigs and stolons of superior grasses. Inherent in the system is a tag or a certificate which accompanies each lot of grass assuring the purchaser of genetic integrity.

Regardless of any impulse to the contrary, KEEP THAT TAG! File it in a safe place until the turf is several years old. There have been instances of off-type grasses appearing in turf that was established from apparently pure material. The "off-types" may show up three years or more after planting. The name of the supplier may be remembered but all evidence as to source, purity and other needed information has been lost. Now there is no way to assess liability because there is no way in which to trace the source and guarantee, if any.

The Blue Tag of Certification means that the seed in the bag wearing the Blue Tag (if it is still sealed) is true to variety and, within prescribed tolerances, free from noxious weeds and impurities. It does not assure the buyer that it will contain zero quantities of OBJECTIONABLE things such as: rough-stalked bluegrass in Merion Kentucky bluegrass or *Poa annua* in imported grass seeds. To exclude these items it is necessary to buy on specification which calls for "zero tolerance" of items that are not wanted.

The important things to remember in purchasing grasses is 1) get Certified stock if it is obtainable and, 2) keep the tag or certificate for future reference. Also, make sure that the area to be planted is not contaminated with the undesirables.

Q. Could you, out of your experience, give me a range of rates for different sources of nitrogen in a seedbed for several widely-used turfgrasses? Please give it to me in terms of "maximum quantity of N that is SAFE?" (So. Carolina)

A. Rates to be given refer to lbs. of N to 1,000 sq. ft. For *solubles* (urea, sulfate of ammonia, ammonium nitrate, nitrate of soda) the maximum safe rate is 2 lbs. for cool-season grasses; approximately double that for warm-season grasses, sprigged.

For straight ureaforms (38% N) the maximum safe rate is 8 lbs. N for cool-season grasses; about double that for warm-season grasses, sprigged.

From all indications it would seem that natural organic N is intermediate.

A mixed fertilizer must be evaluated on the basis of soluble N content. If a mixed fertilizer carries 50% of its N as ureaform the caustic effects of the soluble N portion will be masked. It is good business to learn exactly how much of each kind of N is in your mixed fertilizers.

Rates should be lowered by about $\frac{1}{4}$ when the seedbed is a sand or a sandy loam. Clay loam soils have a higher buffering capacity and can take the highest rates.

The so-called "soluble N" portion of ureaforms does not perform in the same

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