



GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

By FRED V. GRAU

There can be little doubt that complaints on annual bluegrass have increased, very nearly at the same rate as the increase in irrigation facilities. Much has been written on the subject; much more will be written in the future. We can only hope that future discourses will bring about a clear understanding of the interrelated problems and the beginnings of a practical solution.

Chemicals will play an ever-increasing part in the control of *Poa annua*. To be completely successful, the chemical program must be supported by one which introduces new improved grasses that are so competitive that *Poa* cannot again gain a foothold. Research in better grasses continues, but to develop and to adequately test a superior turfgrass, some 15 years will have elapsed, maybe more. The time may be shortened somewhat in case of a vegetatively-propagated grass. When *Poa* is destroyed chemically and the area is reseeded to the same grasses that failed originally—what have we gained?

Water has been hailed as the one great factor that will keep courses green. No one can quarrel with this thesis but, as so many clubs have learned to their sorrow, water has increased *Poa* costs, problems, weeds and clover. The grasses that could survive under the sudden change of management just were not present. Water increases the need for fertilizer which often is not supplied as it is needed.

Another phase of water management suddenly has become critical on many courses. The pipes stand empty because there isn't enough water to meet the demands. "Foolproof automation" may suffer a lapse so that anticipated cover-

age simply did not take place. Result—loss of grass. Lake levels may drop to the danger point which encourages increase of algae.

Is it possible that many new courses are planted cheaply with "quick-green" grasses designed for "quick-show" to attract members which cannot be considered permanent turfgrasses? If so, water can have one sure effect—increase of *Poa*.

Is it possible for irrigation manufacturers and dealers to develop guidelines for the proper use of their systems on different grasses in various climatic regions? To design for "two inches of water a week" is not the answer. We don't quarrel with the rated capacity but with the idea that one must use that much water whether or not it is needed. Perhaps someone can help me out on the answer to this one.

Finally, on how many *Poa* infested golf courses are trial plantings of new grasses being made? Burning Tree and Chevy Chase had many such plantings made when Ferguson, Wilson and Radko were working with me at Beltsville.

Obviously the problem cannot be solved here but it is to be hoped that *thinking* will be stimulated toward the end that all factors will be coordinated in favor of *better turf* without *Poa*. Some have said, "we have so much of it we are simply going to live with it." That may be one way to go.

Q.—Our course is built on sandy loam, half cut out of woods (gum, oak, tulip poplar), half built on tobacco land. Pennncross greens in the woods are developing dark circular areas and, when allowed to become dry, it is extremely difficult to wet the soil again. Greens in the open (tobacco land) are much

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