



GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

By FRED V. GRAU

Not so long ago, when the turfgrass industry was an infant, one individual could cover the United States and do a fair job of advising various segments of the industry on virtually every phase of management from agaricus to zoysia. On a limited scale there is still a place for the *generalist*, but the industry has become more complex and sophisticated so that today the specialist occupies the spotlight.

Proper treatment of a disease demands accurate identification by a pathologist. Soil modification and treatment can be handled best by an agronomist. We could continue through botany, weed control, plant breeding, seed and sod production, irrigation and drainage and many more. Suffice it to say that the entire turfgrass industry will grow and benefit in direct proportion to the teamwork that is displayed by each segment working with unified effort.

Turfgrass councils and foundations today represent the best approach to unification of all interests, whether they are organized on a state or regional basis. For many years the industry has revolved closely around golf. State and local associations, superintendents' associations as well as golf associations, more and more are supporting their turfgrass councils and foundations which direct funds into the most effective research channels.

Now we see the mushrooming of sod producers on an organized basis. They have their own problems peculiar to their activities, but recent acreage assessments for research clearly indicate their desire for teamwork.

There has been a tremendous response

of golf clubs, superintendents, groups, sod growers and individuals to the invitation to become part of the Joseph Valentine Living Memorial. This memorial is the international focal point for all who believe in the concept of better turf. Nothing so clearly could tell the world that the turfgrass industry has come of age and is an integral part of everyday living.

Each of us can swell with pride when we think that we are contributing to the herculean efforts in research, teaching and extension by men like Duich, Juska, Daniel, Beard, Engel, Youngner, Goss, Burton, Miller, Davis, Huffine, Roberts, Harper, and many others.

Their ability to perform is directly dependent upon moral and financial support which, today, is coming largely through the efforts of turfgrass councils and foundations.

A council or a foundation is a unified voice which has stature in the legislative halls. Forty years ago the most articulate voice in Pennsylvania's legislature was that of Joseph Valentine—it carried authority! Truly, we have come far!

Q.—Our new club just opened and I am having trouble with color on my greens, tees and fairways. When we had a lot of rain our grass was nice and green. Now we pump water out of a river that has a lot of oil in it and I'm wondering if this could be the trouble. Is there any way to filter out the oil? You can smell it as it comes out of the sprinklers. (New York)

A.—Before your questions can be answered satisfactorily more information is

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needed on a) soil tests, b) fertilizer, c) water tests. We shall be glad to help when we hear more from you.

Reply to my letter: Sorry I didn't give you more information. I had more problems than just oil. I don't have an oil problem anymore—I took all I could stand and quit my job. My son, who was my assistant, quit at the same time.

Q.—How often should we put calcined clay into our greens?

(Michigan)

A.—This can not be answered satisfactorily with no knowledge of your soil conditions. The introduction of this material can be expected to improve infiltration rate. When water enters the soil slowly and with difficulty it probably is time to cultivate and introduce some calcined clay or a mixture of clay and sand.

Q.—I would like information on correspondence courses at home; also schools for running and keeping golf courses. My work last year consisted of helping to maintain the golf course at this base. I like the work.

(Michigan — an Air Force Base)

A.—We know of no correspondence courses in turfgrass management that we can recommend to you. Successful management of a golf course (or any turfgrass complex) depends upon *educated decisions* concerning the existing conditions. No one successfully has found a way to teach this vast subject short of getting mud and grease under the fingernails and grime in the clothes. Exact subjects (mathematics) can be taught by correspondence. (I once took the course.)

You will be well advised to write to your turfgrass headquarters in your state—Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. Dr. James Beard can be of great help to you. Keep on the course—the industry needs dedicated men who like the work.

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