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Grau's Answers

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It is incumbent on all of us to direct our efforts toward: 1) grasses that tolerate excesses of all kinds with impunity; 2) the judicious use of minimum quantities of water, consistent with good playing conditions, and 3) fertilizer programs that enhance our objectives.

The turfgrass industry desperately needs basic research to learn the *why* of things. We can not go much further in industry-supported "demonstration testing" of trade-name materials. Turfgrass in stress affects a very high percentage of U.S. taxpayers. Concerted effort is needed to direct tax dollars to the universal discipline of turf.

Q.—We have been told that our turf will take wear and tear better and suffer less in hot weather if potash levels are kept high. Why is this, if it is true? (West Virginia)

A.—It is true. Potash is very important in the translocation of sugars in the plant which are manufactured during daylight. At night they are transported to storage organs and are converted to carbohydrates. Low potash means sluggish movement which could result in partial starvation of the turf.

Potash also helps to stiffen cell walls which gives turfgrass leaves more resistance to traffic.

Disease resistance is another factor in favor of keeping potash levels adequate. A rule of thumb is to use about one-half to two-thirds as much potash as nitrogen. Twelve pounds of N would call for six to eight pounds of K during the season.

Potash is soluble and can be leached with high rainfall and heavy irrigation. Use it in light frequent applications.

Q.—At our local meetings we argue over whether to raise our mowers in the summer or to keep them set at the most desirable playing height and just skip a mowing now and then when the turf seems "tired." What is your opinion? (New Jersey)

A.—We favor the policy of maintain-

ing the height of cut that provides the best playing surface over the longest period of time. When grass growth is slow due to heat we favor the plan of skipping a mowing now and then to "rest" the grass. Changing the height of cut will cause a change in the "crown" of the turf which will have to be altered again after summer heat is over.

Q.—Our club is in an area where we can't depend on bermuda yet the cool-season grasses are unsatisfactory in the heat of summer. We were advised to plant Meyer Zoysia. We did this but the golfers don't like it. They say that they can't get a firm stance. Have you any suggestions?

(Kansas)

A.—There are excellent zoysia tees in your area. My guess is that, 1) your mowers are set too high, 2) the grass is soft from excess water, 3) you may be using too much inorganic nitrogen. These practices may help: 1) mow at 1/2 inch with a heavy putting green mower. Remove clippings. The grass may show browning for a short time. It will recover. 2) Fertilize exclusively with a true slow-release nitrogen plus potash. Zoysia needs very little phosphorus. Use about six lbs. nitrogen a year. 3) Lay off the water. Meyer is a very drought tolerant grass. When purplish spots begin to show—water. 4) Topdress with sandy material to true the surface, to firm it, and to avoid scalping. •

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