



GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

By FRED V. GRAU

Spring holds special significance for golf superintendents in the northern parts of the country. It is a time of reawakening for grass, trees, flowers and—most important—golfers. There are those who rushed the season and found the going rather “squishy.”

Superintendents diligently will inspect and assess winter damages such as weather's ravages, rodent activity, early play on dormant turf that was too soft, vandalism, winter sports, disease and so on. Rarely do these things occur in a pattern that admits of a standard organized approach. Each season demands a fresh individual study of causes, effects and remedies.

Freezing and Thawing — Alternate freezing and thawing is normal for spring in the North but few appreciate fully just what it does to soils and turf. Dense compact soils are loosened and aerated. Shallow-rooted plants are heaved out of the ground where they desiccate unless they are firmed into place by rolling.

Turf freezes at the surface during cold nights. When frozen solid enough to support golfers and their equipment, it is perfectly all right for play to proceed with minimum damage expected. But, when the sun waxes warm and the surface thaws, the soil assumes a loosened, wet (mushy) condition.

Play at this time can be ruinous. Traffic pressures will cement soil particles together, roots will be torn, footprints and wheelmarks will affect late play and the superintendent will be hard pressed to repair the damage.

In Memoriam

Marshall E. Farnham, 70, for 38 years superintendent at Philadelphia CC, died March 31 1967. The turfgrass profession has lost an articulate voice which has helped guide the destiny of this industry in many ways.

He held charter memberships in the GCSAA and the Philadelphia sections the Penn. Turf Research Advisory Committee, the Turfgrass Section of the American Society of Agronomy, the Delaware Valley Turfgrass Association and the Penn. Turfgrass Council. He also served as president of the national and Philadelphia GCSA'S. He served on the USGA Green Section Committee.

Marshall was one who, with remarkable accuracy and foresight, brought into being the Turfgrass program at Penn. State. Soon he also stimulated action which developed into a strong turfgrass extension program in Pennsylvania, the first in the world.

Marshall leaves his gracious wife, Jane, two sons and five grandchildren—and uncountable friends and associates, all of whom held him in the high esteem he so well deserved.

(Note: A Resolution of Tribute and Regret was entered in the minutes of the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council Proceedings at its annual meeting as Mr. Farnham was laid to rest.)

Topdressing — No other practice on the golf course has gained such universal acceptance for repairing breaks in turf. Low places are filled and turf is smoothed for the golfer's pleasure. Decomposition

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