

Answers to turf questions

by Fred V. Grau



Excess water. The widespread heavy rains dramatically have emphasized the advantages of good drainage: 1) surface, to get excess water away quickly; 2) internal, to allow excess water to move downward to pull air into the pores as it moves; 3) sub-surface, to remove the gravitational water that drains thru the turf and the soil.

Flooding damage has been heavy in many areas. This phase of damage to golf courses received pictorial publicity at the last Mid-Atlantic Turfgrass Conference in Baltimore. Repairs mean hard work over long days. We need to devote more attention to "upstream" areas where run-off can be reduced by the judicious use of vegetation, catch basins, recharge sumps and similar. Golf courses often are the victims of "progress" (shopping centers with acres of non-absorbent pavement, house roofs, etc.). Water control goes far beyond the line fence.

After heavy spring rains comes summer heat. Soft succulent grass (and *Poa* encouraged by the moisture) may suffer severely unless irrigation systems are used judiciously to "taper off" the moisture and to bring the turf to a firmness with just enough water for growth and sufficient greenness.

This is a question directed to our readers because this writer is ignorant of the answer.

Q.—How many golf courses lie within, and participate in, local or regional watershed districts or programs?

A.—Perhaps our readers will supply some answers.

Q.—Our bermudagrasses were so slow to grow this spring (cold, wet) that, in order to have some color and body to the fairway and to turf, we spiked and overseeded at a good rate (60 lbs./acre) with a mixture of Highland and Astoria colonial bentgrass seed. Not knowing

when the soil would be firm enough again for our fertilizer spreader, we elected to go along with a slow-release nitrogen for sustained color and growth. There has been criticism on several points. In your opinion did we pursue a wise course? Will our bermuda suffer from the overseeding?

(Virginia)

A.—From what I've seen, and from what you have told me, I would give you firm moral support for your program. There is no "credibility gap." The main point is, were your members pleased with the results? Don't worry about the bermuda—it will muddle through when hot weather comes. If it doesn't, repeat your overseeding and fertilizing this fall for brilliant results.

Q.—We have a fairway on which we can't seem to maintain a decent turf. Either it is too wet, or too dry, or it is loaded with crabgrass. We've decided to aerate heavily in late August, incorporate seedbed fertilizer and limestone, and seed to Kentucky 31 fescue at 300 lbs./acre. We have this question. Should we add some bluegrass? If so, which one and how much?

(Maryland)

A.—This has been the subject of research at Beltsville for more than 10 years. Dr. Felix V. Juska tells me (and I take visitors to see his plots) that the straight fescue without bluegrass consistently has been better than the mixture. For you I'd say skip the bluegrass—for now.

At Gate of Heaven Cemetery near Cincinnati the combination of tall fescue and bluegrass has been outstanding, but the fescue is not Kentucky 31; the bluegrasses are Merion and Delta. For now, go straight with 31, and keep the N up to about five lbs. with slow-release. □



More than 500 professional turfmen attended the 38th Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference held at Michigan State University. They heard reports on late research developments and recommendations. Pictured are (l to r) Dr. James Beard, MSU turfgrass researcher, Mr. John King, coordinator of the two-year technical training program in turfgrass management at MSU, Dr. James Watson of Toro, Mr. Norm Kramer, superintendent at Point O' Woods Country Club, Benton Harbor, Michigan, and Mr. Bill Lyons, owner of Lyons Golf, Canal Fulton, Ohio.