

Answers to turf questions



by Fred V. Grau

On March 12 this writer participated in an all-day educational conference (second annual) sponsored and conducted by the Philadelphia Association of Golf Course Superintendents. The program was published in the March 1968 issue of "The Bonnie Greensward." The weather was foul but attendance was excellent at this studious high-level "grass-roots" session. It was all business and was beamed directly at problems of fairways. Cooperation of the manager of the General Washington Country Club, including a fine lunch, helped to make the conference a solid success.

Educational chairman Warren Bidwell invited, among others, superintendents Cammarato, Miller and Watson from the Mid-Atlantic Association to discuss "Irrigation." This brought authentic information from neighbors with similar problems and it helped to cement friendly relations on a technical basis.

It would seem that this approach to the understanding of one's problems has much to commend it. Superintendents and their assistants were there to learn all they could. Competent speakers answered every question on the basis of what is best for the Philadelphia area. This all-day program on a narrow subject of interest to all is so much more effective than a single after-dinner speaker at a monthly meeting. The papers presented would do credit to any state or national conference. The difference was that everything was concentrated on what is best for the immediate area.

Other superintendents' associations should be encouraged to seek similar ways to build interest among their members and to provide solid information on pressing problems. In passing, it should be noted that a high percentage of those present *took notes!* This is highly commendable.

Q.—We heard about the Philadelphia Association conference and would like to request a copy of the program. To whom should we write?

(New York)

A.—The Bonnie Greensward is published by the Philadelphia Association

of Golf Course Superintendents. Editor is David C. Holler, RD 1, Box 149, Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania 17972.

Q.—We suspect that poor drainage may be the underlying cause for some of our poor fairway turf. What is a good guide to help us recognize poor drainage when it doesn't show on the surface?

(Maryland)

A.—Dig a hole several feet deep in the suspected area(s). Poor drainage is indicated by vari-colored mottling (orange, purple, grey, rusty brown, etc.). Insufficient oxygen induces reduction of metallic ions. Roots tend to be restricted and discolored. Good drainage is indicated by uniform bright soil color, deep healthy roots. Each site must be evaluated on its own merits. When in doubt consult your state soils specialist.

Q.—Controversy rages concerning the use of creeping bent in bent fairways where the intent has been to have colonial types only. Would you discuss this for us?

(Indiana)

A.—Every colonial-type bent on the market today contains some seeds which produce creepers so that the resulting turf will be more or less creeping bent. Some of these creepers are "wild" types (unpredictable) that spread rapidly and thatch badly. The question arises, "If we are going to have creeping bent anyway (types and origins unknown), why not introduce a known creeper that has desirable characteristics and is competitive!"

Most agronomists will recommend the inclusion of Penncross creeping bent (Blue Tag Certified seed only) in fairway mixtures where bent is the desired permanent turf. Rates may vary from 5 to 20 lbs. to the acre. The cost of Penncross seed (economics) largely will determine the rate per acre in a mixture with colonial types.

Those who say that Penncross in fairways is unmanageable should ask two questions: 1) Is it true Penncross? 2) Is management suitable? □