



Answers to turf questions

by Fred V. Grau

Of this and that

Response to the idea of a museum for antique turfgrass tools has been heart-warming. One man said, "I used to work for John Morley. We have an attic full of old tools. Where shall I send them?" Quickly I said, "Don't send anything just now! Write me a letter listing the items that you would want to donate to a national museum." If enough people send me a list of items there will be the chance to start estimating the floor space needed for display. We do not yet have a national committee or a location—only a fertile idea that seems to have appeal.

We wish publicly to congratulate the golf professionals for their master stroke in securing the services of a real pro in his own right, Joseph C. Dey, Jr. Joe stands tall wherever he goes, and wherever he goes, the game of golf flourishes. We are delighted that he has accepted a position on the Honorary Board of Directors of "The H.B. Musser Turfgrass Fellowship" about which there will be publicity in the very near future.

The thirst for information seems to be unquenchable. Records again were broken at the Penn State Conference. (My Viet Nam trip eliminated me from the National and the Virginia meetings—sorry!) Fewer letters with questions reach me these days, but I am able to

pick up excellent discussions at conferences, particularly with turfgrass students. They are fresh and eager and they want to know! Thanks to efforts by our current turfgrass leaders they are getting answers. We need more studies on the development of superior "fool-proof" grasses for turf. But this takes money. Hopefully the Musser project will speed the release of better grasses for better turf.

Q.—We have large areas of zoysia and bermudagrass on our course. Last fall we let it grow up for winter protection (and to save mowing costs). Someone suggested that we get rid of the excess grass by burning. Will that hurt the stand?

(Virginia)

A.—If burning is done while the soil still is moist and cool and while the grass still is dormant or semi-dormant, no harm will result. Actually, the grass will turn green much sooner. The black residue draws heat from the sun and allows the soil to warm more quickly. Damage might occur if the new growth is well advanced. Then it may be better to remove the dead material mechanically. Oh yes, you really should advise your fire department in case there is a regulation.

Q.—At our course we are considering the purchase of a mist blower for applying materials to our greens. What is your opinion?

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NO UGLY seed heads

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Grau

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Is there something as good or better?

(Virginia)

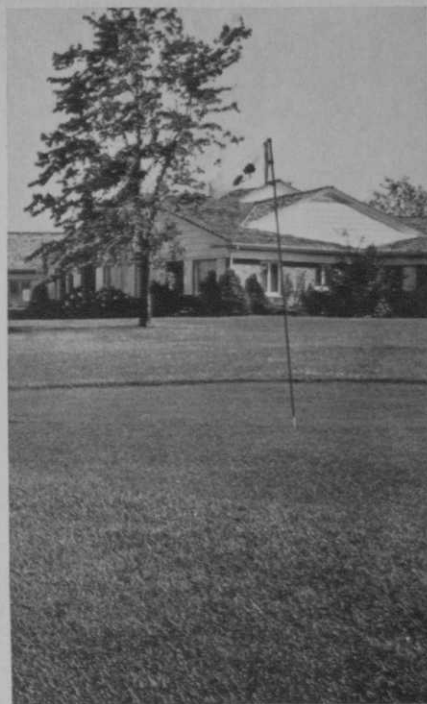
A.—Mist blowers do not seem to be very practical where air currents are a problem. Drift is a source of loss and a potential hazard where finely-divided droplets are concerned. Hydraulic seeders (Finn, Bowie, Reinco) appear to me to be extremely practical on the golf course. They can be used to apply fertilizers, lime, fungicides, herbicides, seed, wood cellulose fiber mulch on new plantings of seed or stolons, and even for planting grass vegetatively. Hydraulic seeders are multi-purpose. The mist blower must operate in a much narrower range.

Q.—We have heard many times that phosphorus and arsenic conflict, particularly in the control of

Poa annua. When phosphorus levels are high it seems that arsenicals work rather poorly. Conversely, arsenic becomes more effective when P levels are low. What is the explanation?

(Pennsylvania)

A.—Phosphorus and arsenic are very close together in the Periodic Table, a chart of known chemical elements. Their atomic weights are very similar and can replace each other in many chemical combinations. In the plant cell, P is essential for growth and development. *Poa annua* thrives on a high P diet. Most turfgrasses need very little P. When P is deficient and As (arsenic) is introduced, the grass plant takes in As. In the cell this heavy metal element precipitates the proteins which then cannot be translocated to the growing points. The plant yellows, becomes stunted and eventually dies if the concentration of As is high enough.



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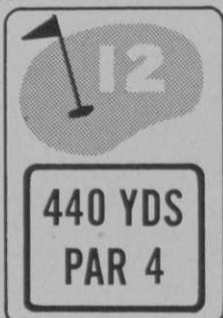
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