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**Answers
 to turf
 questions**

by Fred V. Grau

Turf has lost a friend

Father Norbert J. Miller, founder and director of Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Montgomery, Ohio, died on June 15th, 1969. Father Miller's passing is a serious loss to the turfgrass industry. He was a member of the American Society of Agronomy and attended meetings regularly. Turf conferences at Purdue and Penn State also were on his agenda. His deep and abiding interest in better cemetery turf resulted in many innovations, including Terra-Tires on all turf equipment and the development of superior sod with Merion bluegrass and, more recently, with Fylking. His scientific interests led him into the treatment of various seeds with cobalt 90 and the selection of plants that showed exceptional promise.

Photography was of particular interest to Father Miller. Some of his color photos of crownvetch

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roots received national acclaim. Laboratory equipment enabled him to obtain photomicrographs of disease spores on grasses.

Holly growing absorbed part of his scientific time and a splendid holly orchard at the cemetery attests to both his dedication and his proficiency.

Truly the spirit of Gregor Mendel lived in Father Miller. We respect the devoutly religious priest who is drawn to the scientific side of life and pursues those teachings as assiduously as the clerical. We shall miss him—he stimulated our thinking and established for all of us goals and challenges.

Q.—Our common bermudagrass fairways are becoming more and more compacted. When we have a hot, dry summer with no irriga-

tion we don't have much grass. Poa annua is dominant and bermuda is thin. Aeration equipment seems inadequate and unable to penetrate. Several approaches to our problem occur to us including: 1. heavier aerating equipment; 2. all-over cart paths; 3. wetting agents; 4. bermuda hybrids; 5. fairway irrigation; 6. more fertilizer, and 7. plow portions to renovate while keeping course in play.

Your suggestions will be appreciated.

(North Carolina)

A.—Your problem leaves me at a bit of a disadvantage because I do not know all the details of your operations, soil tests, fertilizer usage and other. In the absence of these data I suggest these approaches to your problem.

1. Operate your aerating equipment when the soil is naturally receptive from rainfall. I would

not consider heavier machines.

2. Fertilize immediately after aerating to get as much material as possible into the rootzone. Consider using ureaform nitrogen for at least half your N requirements. It would seem that you need to use somewhat more N than you have been using in order to develop thicker turf.

3. Wetting agents—defer decision until other methods are tried.

4. Cart paths all over may help but no decision can be made from my position.

5. Improved bermudagrasses (hybrids) should help because, under a given set of conditions, they tend to form a tighter, denser turf that is more aggressive and more disease resistant.

6. Fairway irrigation will help, but this is something that requires study on the site with all factors taken into consideration.

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7. Renovation by plowing, while trying to keep the course in play, seems rather impractical.

All in all it would seem that your course needs to be studied rather carefully by a turfgrass specialist who is thoroughly familiar with your conditions. Then it will be possible to set up a program that will produce the desired results. This I can not do from here.

Q.—For several years we have had U-3 bermudagrass tees. They are excellent for about three months, but the members are disgusted with them from early spring until sometime in June. We are considering cool-season grasses but we can't decide whether we should go to bent or to bluegrass. What is your opinion?

(Maryland)

A.—To go the bent route you would, in effect, have another set of putting greens. You would use Penncross and manage it in a similar fashion to your greens. With your labor situation I would advise against bent.

The newer bluegrasses can tolerate close mowing much better than the old common Kentucky bluegrass. They are much more resistant to diseases and they respond better to fertilizer applications. I would recommend serious consideration of starting a sod nursery of a blend of the best of the new bluegrasses so that you can strip the bermuda this fall and replace with your own bluegrass sod.

Under daily management you would mow at one-half inch only the small teeing area to be used that day. The rest of the tee would be cut at 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches to favor the bluegrass. Occasional close mowing will do no harm as long as the grass can grow again to a proper height. □