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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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## Grau

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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.

*continued on page 24*

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