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Answers to turf questions

by Fred V. Grau

Leadership

Great credit is due the practical pioneers in greenkeeping who, by the "seat of their pants" established a sound basis for today's technological developments. They epitomized the idea of "leadership" not only for their fellow workers, but also for the scientists who learned from them.

Gradually the scientific instruments that were capable of measuring progress became available to the "turfgrass fraternity." Before these new tools could be used to advantage, there had to be men who were trained not only to use them, but to interpret the results. This came about slowly because funds to train the leaders in research were unavailable.

Recognition for turf study came in 1946 when the American Society of Agronomy, the most respected of all agronomic scientific societies, accepted this new phase of agriculture as an integral part of its concern. Soon there was upsurge of interest in the nation's universities where competent

Continued on page 24



NOW Warren brings you Warren's A-20™ Bluegrass

The ideal grass for tees, approaches and collars. Takes short cut. Grows upright, gives better support to ball. Resistant to leaf spot, mildew, rust and stripe smut. Develops less thatch. Greens up earlier, stays green later.

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Grau

Continued from page 22

leaders must be trained.

From 1946 to 1953 funds were "scrounged" from one source or another, resulting in the training of several Ph.D.'s who have been the vanguard of leadership in the United States. For the last 10 years there has been a serious decline in efforts to supply and to train these leaders who are so essential to further progress.

Now, with the establishment of the H.B. Musser Turfgrass Fellowship, Inc., we hope new, vigorous leadership in the turfgrass industry will be developed. We hope that trained, qualified superintendents, who are desperately needed to manage the hundreds of new golf courses which are being built each year, will also be developed. More than anything else we must provide for capable management and supervision of the nation's golf courses and other turfgrass areas. For a man to take charge of critical recreational facilities he must be well grounded in a multi-disciplinary approach to the problems associated with maintaining suitable turf.

With an adequate resource pool of trained turfgrass scientists with Ph.D. degrees, we can count on accelerated progress in better turf; without them we can count on a future of mediocrity based on the feudal system of apprenticeships.

Q.—You have written favorably of tall fescue as a "turfgrass with a future." Do you believe that this coarse grass, which very few people like, does have a future and that it can be refined to become as acceptable as bluegrass, for example?

(Nebraska)

A.—As one of the early proponents of tall fescue and its virtues, while recognizing its faults, I am firmly convinced that this grass has tremendous potential as a grass for refined turfgrass areas. I have worked with it since 1936 when I introduced it into Pennsylvania. In 1945 I saw tall fescue in Oregon in all its glory. In 1947 I planted a 17-acre lawn at Alta at

Continued on page 27

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