



by Fred V. Grau

## ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

### Q's and A's

**Q**—Admitting the need for more trained golf course superintendents and the concomitant need for trained Ph.D.'s who are competent to educate the new superintendents, how is this to be accomplished? Can we expect any help from tax funds? (Indiana)

**A**—Desperately we hope for relief through tax funds but, at present, we feel that we must rely almost entirely upon private sources of funds. Until 1953 we had a good thing going in Ph.D. training through the USGA Green Section Service Subscriptions. Since then this phase of our program has been sporadic.

The latest effort in this direction is the H.B. Musser Turfgrass Fellowship which is designed to finance Ph.D. fellowships to get the program off dead center. Progress is slow due to Internal Revenue Service restrictions. When these hurdles are overcome this tax-exempt corporation will swing into action and will start gathering funds to implement its program.

**Q**—What do you consider to be the most critical problem in the turfgrass industry today? (Texas)

**A**—It is not the need for improved turfgrass. It is not the need for better fertilizers. It is not equipment. It is not labor. It is not budgets. It is the lack of highly-trained professional golf course superintendents, who can administer budgets, who can meet the labor situation, who use modern equipment and who are able to relate to club officials and understand their position. Before we can develop a reserve of these top notch superintendents we must establish a number of fellowships leading to the Ph.D. degree. These Ph.D.'s then will staff the training centers where the superintendents will be developed. The situation is more critical than most are willing to admit.

**Q**—Bluegrass blends seem to be popular. What blend looks best to you? (Pennsylvania)

**A**—For more than two years I've been deeply impressed by the quality of the blend which forms the border around the bluegrass and fescue plots at the Joseph Valentine Turfgrass Research Center. According to Dr. Joseph Duich this blend is made up of equal parts of Merion; Fylking; Prato and Pennstar. Those who went to The Field Day, June 24 to 25, saw this remarkable piece of turf. Some bluegrasses are ravaged by leafspot, others by striped smut, some are thinned by snowmold. The blend in the border is so nearly perfect that it is hard to believe.

**Q**—Among all the talk about pollution, the environment and ecology we have wondered about the position of turfgrass in the total picture. We would appreciate your evaluation of the present situation. (Massachusetts)

**A**—At the risk of seeming to be biased in favor of turfgrass as one way of upgrading the environment I must confess that I am having difficulty in coming up with anything negative. The living turf (roots, blades, microorganisms) is an ef-

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## GRAU

(Continued from page 19)

fective filter, absorbing rainfall, preventing erosion, yielding life-giving oxygen. Runoff is minimized as is silting of streams and reservoirs. Aerial-borne toxins are trapped and nullified. The chemicals that the golf course superintendent applies to keep pests in check are absorbed by the mat of turf which limits the movement of materials toward water courses, lakes and ponds. By contrast, erosion from farmlands carries everything, good and bad, to foul our water sources. We cannot overlook the cooling effect of turf. Transpiration from the countless green grass blades helps to maintain more uniform climatic conditions.

This is an "off-the-cuff" evaluation. I don't have scientific data. Hopefully readers will write in and add to this incomplete coverage.

So far as we know, no one exercises greater care in the use of dangerous chemicals and in the disposal of empty containers than the golf course superintendent. This, in itself, is a plus for the turfgrass profession.

**Q**—Recently we rebuilt a putting green using native sandy soil which is known to drain very well. After the green settled we noticed a depression that held water. It was especially noticeable this past winter when the soil was frozen. What can you suggest as a remedy for this situation?

(Vermont)

**A**—The low place held water this winter because the soil was frozen. With well-drained sandy soil you should have no problem when spring comes. If water stands longer than you would like to have it, try punching holes with a tubular-tine fork. This should let the surface water drain down quickly. If the problem still persists you may be forced to lift the sod, fill the depression with the same sandy soil that is in the green, and replace the sod. □