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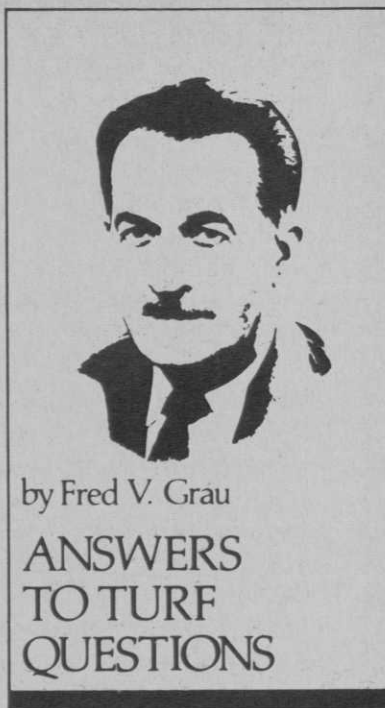
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by Fred V. Grau

ANSWERS
TO TURF
QUESTIONS

Turfgrass: a "must" for a better environment

Living turf is a significant factor in improving the environment. It has roots in the soil, it absorbs rainfall, oxygen is released, carbon dioxide is absorbed, respiration cools the atmosphere, players feel the resilience underfoot and the natural green color is a delight to the eye.

Plastic or artificial turf is something different. It adds nothing to the environment, it has no roots, it absorbs no rainfall, releases no oxygen, has nothing to do with carbon dioxide.

Absorption of air-borne toxins by living turf has to be a real plus. This feature is being played up by horticulturists and arborists as a reason for planting trees. A few have even plugged turfgrass for the same reason.

Living, breathing turf has been, in some instances, replaced by synthetic turf for two very good reasons: 1) The owners were unwilling to spend the few extra dollars to prepare the base, the drainage, and to supply the right grass and to fertilize and manage it properly; 2) The turfgrass manager assigned to take care of the turf didn't know his job and couldn't meet the job requirements.

True, there are some situations where living turf can't take it. One example is the Astrodome where

there is not enough light to grow grass and the intensity of usage is beyond the capacity of living grass to survive.

In golf the only place where an artificial mat seems to be justified is on a tee which is too small and where the play is so heavy that living turf just can't make the grade. Golf superintendents have a glorious chance to keep living turf in the "ball park" by calling on all resources (their own and those of university scientists) to maintain beautiful playing turf under seemingly impossible odds.

Q—Our club is considering springing P-16 bermudagrass into new fairways in 1971 after some kind of temporary seeding. In your opinion is this the way to go?

(Maryland)

A—My personal experience does not include P-16, although its origin and background are well known to me. In consultation with Dr. Juska at Beltsville and with A.J. Powell at University of Maryland I conclude: 1) P-16 has not been released or approved for use on fairways in Maryland; 2) performance in test plots has been mediocre and disappointing. With several excellent cool-season grasses of known performance available, which provide green turf nearly year-round, may I suggest a reassessment of your goals. Annual re-seeding to thicken turf in certain areas seems to be excellent planning especially with improved re-seeding equipment that does not require "scorched earth" or taking the course out of play.

Q—Ours is a new seaside course which occasionally is subject to salt spray. Greens will be seeded fall 1970 (we hope). My choice is Putting Green Quality Blue Tag Certified Pennncross creeping bent. Are there other putting green bents that I should consider. (Maryland)

A—Pennncross has all the salt-spray tolerance that you will need for your greens. As you know, this polycross bent has had bred into it the ability to compensate for unusual conditions and to adapt itself to the local environment. This advantage simply cannot be ignored. Cost is moderate.

(Continued on page 60)