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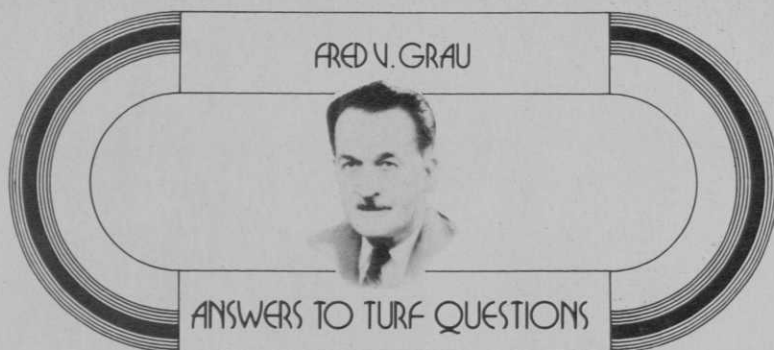
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TURF SCHOOLS: WHAT AND WHY?

When one begins to catalog the turf-grass conferences held throughout the country, one develops a suspicion that there is a preponderance of emphasis on golf turf. This is not so very surprising, considering that there has been a lot of influence and pressure exerted by the United States Golf Assn., by the Golf Course Superintendents Assn. and by state and local superintendent associations.

This apparent channelization has been broken in a number of instances. Rhode Island has a day set aside for general turf. Several states have sod field days and conferences. New Jersey separates lawn and estate turf from golf turf. Purdue has a broad approach to the field of turf. These are only a few instances.

Now, I wish to talk about turf schools, which are conducted specifically for landscapers, nurserymen who deal in turf, homeowners, commercial people who talk turf to the homeowner, the estate owner and the industrial firm that wants beautiful turf to improve its image. A case in point is the Southeastern Pennsylvania Turf School, which has completed its 10th successful year. It is sponsored jointly by the Pennsylvania State University Extension Service and the Pennsylvania Turf-grass Council. The council acts as treasurer. The committee that plans and executes the school consists primarily of county agricultural agents with a council representative. Golf course superintendents are not turned away, but are not specifically invited. They have their golf-oriented conference at Penn State in February. Attendance has varied between 250 and 400.

The success of the Southeastern School has given rise to the first an-

nual Southwestern Turf School, which was held in east Pittsburgh in January. Attendance topped 200, and the conference was considered a rousing success. Many are looking forward to 1974. It, too, is sponsored by the council and extension.

This writer first participated in a turf school in 1935 at Haverford College, Philadelphia. Charles Hallowell, then county agent, developed it with the help of the Philadelphia Gardeners Assn. That was the prototype, which was very stimulating and successful. These turf schools deserve the utmost consideration so they can reach the many local operators who are in contact with those who want better lawns, parks, athletic fields, and so on. A late bulletin says that similar turf schools are being conducted in Harrisburg and in Allentown (Pa.). This movement deserves to grow!

MANNA FROM HEAVEN?

Q—*Practically every golf club in the world is the beneficiary of some development in equipment, improved turfgrasses, more efficient safer pesticides, new and better fertilizers, and so on. The folks at our club have wondered "from whence comes this largesse?" Is it manna from the sky or did it cost someone money, time and effort? We depend, for example, on fine-textured hybrid bermudagrasses, Penncross bent, several of the new bluegrasses and ryegrasses and a range of pesticides and improved long-lasting fertilizers. How can we contribute to the improvement of turf?* (North Carolina)

A—To coin a phrase, "I'm glad you asked that." To give financial support to research and teaching programs in turf, several states have organized and developed turf-grass councils. These councils provide memberships for firms, golf

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clubs, individuals and associations that are involved in turf. These membership monies are turned over to qualified research institutions, which do the job of developing and testing these newer and better things for better turf.

Because this writer belongs to several councils, but is more intimately associated with the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, let me tell how the Pennsylvania system works. Golf clubs are invited to join as Sustaining Members at \$100 a year. Superintendents are urged to put this item in the maintenance budget so that it becomes routine. Tax-assist money and grants-in-aid no longer can support the full-blown program. Firms that make their living from turf also are invited to join at \$100 a year. We have not neglected the individual, who can be affiliated for a modest \$10 a year. Then, too, there is a slot for contributions. In this category anyone can help, no matter where or who they are. We have people who enjoy the fruits of

Pennsylvania research in such far-away places as California, Hawaii, Australia and South Africa. With the exception of minor expenses for clerical help and office supplies, all monies are transferred to the Pennsylvania Turfgrass program—with no overhead skimmed off the top.

Other states operate similarly. Plans are afoot to coordinate activities among state councils.

NEW RYEGRASSES WORTH COST?

Q—*In overseeding bermudagrass greens, most clubs have relied mainly on common (domestic) ryegrass. Now clubs are being urged to use the new turf-type perennial ryegrasses, which, among other things, are said to be easier to mow clean. Do you think that the extra expense is justified? Are these grasses that much better?*

(Georgia)

A—I will vote for the new turf-type perennial ryegrasses, preferably in a blend. Leaders include Pennfine, Manhattan, NK-100 and NK-200. Supplies are limited, which is one reason for blends.

Blends also overcome a weakness in one strain or another. Mowing clean is but one advantage. These new ryegrasses are less competitive with bermuda; they persist longer into hot weather (smoother transition), which gives the bermuda a better chance to recover and they are much more resistant to diseases. The color is brilliant compared to annual ryegrass and the texture is comparable to bentgrass. Resistance to cold is another plus. Yes, I would say that the higher price per pound is amply justified. Expense may be only a little greater, because less seed is required.

LIME DUST PROBLEM

Q—*Most golf courses in this area, and in the rest of the state, use limestone generously to improve fertilizer efficiency, to keep thatch to a minimum and for the general good of the grass and micro-organisms. The trouble is, every time lime is spread there is a general outcry because of the dust on golfers' shoes and in the air. Dust drifting onto ericaceous plants is*

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