

FRED V. GRAU



ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

Q's AND A's

Q—The statement concerning “no mower pickup” (of powdered UF) in your Q & A in May’s issue of GOLFDOM seems to be inaccurate based on tests conducted in Wisconsin and Florida. These tests showed that greens mowers picked up more N from powdered UF than from granular UF. The pickup from a dark granular sludge product was negligible. May we have your comments? (Wisconsin)

A—In the words of a respected research colleague and I quote, “Concerning mower pickup of fertilizer . . . common sense should prevent most fertilizer pickup.” My experience tells me that it is much easier to rinse a fine-grained powdered N material into close-grained turf to reduce mower pickup than a coarse-grained granular material. This is only common sense. In the final analysis, it is the way that the materials are handled that determines the outcome. This discussion in no way is intended to favor or to discredit any single material. The watch word is commonsense.

Q—At our club we built a green with eight inches of a prepared mix over a six-inch bed of sand. The mix consisted of about 65 per cent coarse river sand and 35 per cent of composted sawdust. Penncross was seeded at 1½ pounds of 1,000 square feet. We have a good stand of grass, but the green is soft and spongy. It footprints badly and the mower scalps many places. Can you offer a suggestion that would help eliminate the problem?(South Africa)

A—Because I know a little about conditions in your country, my analysis is that the high percentage of sawdust is responsible for the puffy conditions of the green.

There is a possibility that the sawdust has been incompletely composted and is still undergoing decomposition in the green. By using a mixture of 85 per cent river sand and 15 per cent composted sawdust, you should be able to provide a firm surface that will not be subject to scalping. Try a mixture of 85 per cent sand, 10 per cent sawdust and 5 per cent clay to provide a reservoir for holding nutrients.

Q—We need sod for several areas on our golf course. We have made inquiries of several sod growers, but their answers are vague and varied. How can we be sure that we will get the right kind of sod for each use? (Indiana)

A—The principle of “certification” has become increasingly important for the very reason that you indicate—getting what you pay for. You will be well advised to seek the advice of the turfgrass specialists at Purdue to learn: 1) just what you can expect from certified sod and 2) what kinds of sod are grown under the certification label. It is regrettable that a hard-and-fast specific answer cannot be given. Regulations differ from state to state. In every sod-producing state there are specialists at the universities who can give you some excellent guidance.

Q—When, 2, 4-D first came on the market there was a recommenda-

Congratulations to Dr. Fred Grau and to his bride, the former Frances Holyoke McCoy. They were married July 1 and will live in College Park, Md. They were classmates at the University of Kansas. He continued in turf research and she became a newspaper woman.

tion to dissolve the powder in Carbowax. Isn't Carbowax used anymore? If not, why? (New York)

A—The principal difficulty with Carbowax was its high melting point. Temperatures had to be above 70 degrees F in order to use it. In one instance, 2, 4-D in Carbowax was sprayed on fairways in October on a warm day. By the time the job was finishing, the temperature had dropped into the 50s. The Carbowax hardened in the spray nozzles, which created considerable difficulty.

The temperature never got up to 70 degrees until the following July. Everyone wondered why the weeds were not dying. In hot July, the Carbowax melted and released all the 2, 4-D. Result? *Poa annua* started dying wherever the spray had hit; nothing could stop it. It took some sleuthing to analyze the problem. Now you know one reason why Carbowax soon became unpopular.

Q—Would you like to come out to see our irrigation setup? We have been watering the turf at our recreation center with effluent water for the past five years. Our course is within 10 miles of where you live. The flow of water from the extended aeration treatment plant to the irrigation pond (chlorinated) is small, but during dry periods every gallon helps out. (Maryland)

A—Your question is the easiest one I've had to answer in a long time. Yes, I want to see the setup. Also, I've given your name to a firm that is developing an 18-hole course, which will have effluent irrigation. They, too, are interested. Odd that you've been doing this for five years and we didn't know about it. Thanks for writing. □