

### DO PLANTS RESPOND TO LOVE?

To this question there are those who will answer emphatically and unequivocally, "Yes!" High school students repeatedly in science fair projects have subjected various types of plants to "thought waves" and to "sound waves." One set of plants, assaulted and bombarded with raucous rock and roll at high decibel levels, grew stunted and unthrifty. Another equal set heard only calm, soothing music (Brahms, Mendelssohn, Stravinsky and others). Reports indicate that the calm "loving" music produced more robust, healthier plants that bore flowers and fruit profusely.

Other projects report on the effects on plants of the human voice and mental attitude of the gardener. One set of plants was subjected to harsh, coarse voices. An equal set "heard" soft, loving voices and received tender loving care. Again, love conquered; the plants produced abundant flowers and fruit.

I would have a hard time finding these references again among all the various magazines I read voraciously. What I have synopsized above accurately describes the information I have gleaned from authentic publications.

Occasionally, I accept a reading assignment that is so difficult I must keep my dictionary open at my side. Such a book, which I've only read once (but will re-read many times), is "The Delicate Creation, Towards a Theology of the Environment" by Christopher Derrick, published by Devin-Adair. In the book the author suggests that 20th century man contains within himself a tendency toward an ancient heresy (Mani-

chaean), which views the world and environment as evil and hostile and nature as an enemy (hate). He suggests, for the good of man's future, that man replace this hostility with a "cosmic piety" (love). This view acknowledges the world as good and lovely, as something to be loved and cherished, although it may cost man something in material comfort and economic expansion. A workable "cosmic piety" might give all of us a chance to sit quietly, get our breath back and discover peace, quiet and the human value of friends and neighbors. Perhaps the hard-to-read brilliance of Derrick and his "cosmic piety" does have something in common with the science fair students' experiments.

Before the environmental crisis destroys all of us, certainly we will lose nothing if we develop a calm, quiet loving approach to nature. I believe most of my friends in turf practice "cosmic piety" without being aware of it. Our rare and fragile home, earth, has not yet been destroyed. With our help, it may yet be renewed.

**Q**—*We have an area (tee size) adjacent to one of our teeing areas that is continuously saturated. There is no good way to drain it. We think there may even be a spring there. Our mowers frequently get bogged down. It's an eye sore. Do you have any suggestions?* (Pennsylvania)

**A**—Yes, capitalize on the continuous supply of moisture. Stop trying to grow and mow grass and convert the "eye sore" into a beauty spot by growing wetland and bog plants for beauty, interest and utility. Space the plants and identify them with suitable modest markers. Tell your members through

*continued on page 12*



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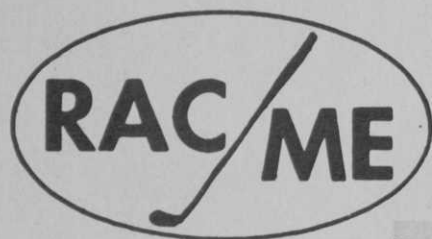
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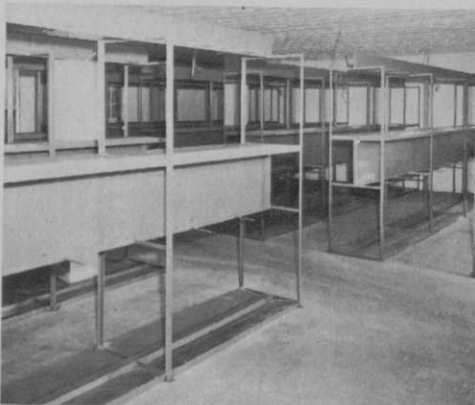
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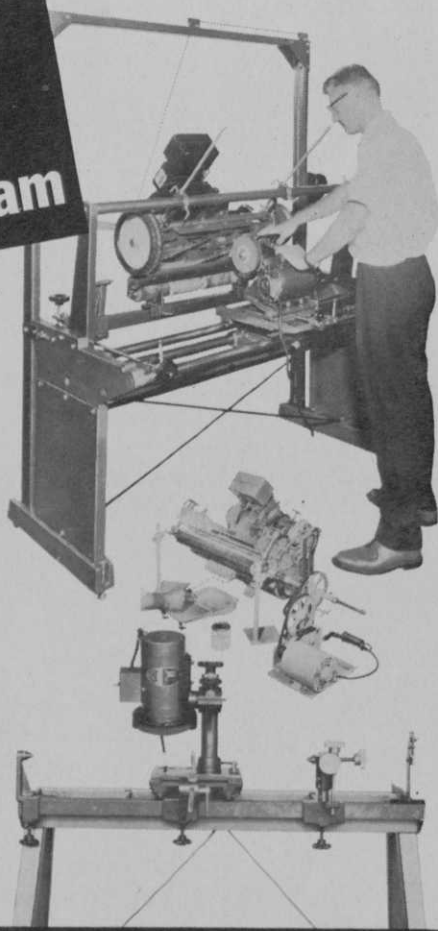
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the club bulletin what you are doing in the name of ecology. Convert your liability into a human-interest asset and save the cost of maintenance.

Here's a partial list of wetland type plants for a starter: ferns, bulrush, sedge (*Cyperus* spp), cattail, hibiscus, pitcher plant, swamp maple, corkscrew, willow, sagittaria (arrow-leaf), calamus (sweet flag), skunk cabbage, mint, watercress, jewelweed, marsh marigold, Venus flytrap.

With the help of the National Arboretum, I am compiling a more comprehensive list. Good luck, and let me hear from you.

**Q**—Many superintendents have mixed natural organic materials with their moist compost to produce heat which kills weed seeds and provides clean topdressing material. When these same materials are applied to putting greens during cold, wet weather, there is no response. Do they lie there in "cold storage" until suitable temperatures occur? Sometimes, there are multiple applications made to try to get a response. Would an application of a quick-acting soluble be advisable to get things going? When the weather turns hot and wet, is there a possibility that, in the micro-climate of the greens, we might have a miniature "compost pile" with development of heat (and rapid release of nitrogen) that the grass can't take? (Pennsylvania)

**A**—You have done some good deductive reasoning. These materials do lie in "cold storage" during cold, wet periods. The "multiple applications" act as a single application when breakdown starts. A soluble-containing material can trigger the action as temperatures rise. The development of heat is a reasonable possibility. □

### CORRECTION

In Dr. Grau's September, 1972, column on page 17 a mistake was made in line eight. The corrected line should read: "In reseeding (a necessity) we were advised to add Pennfine or Manhattan perennial ryegrass (two to three pounds per 1,000 square feet) to the 1½ pounds of Penncross."