



DR. FRED V. GRAU

ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

SHORTAGES IN PEACE TIME

The last declared war ended about 30 years ago. The people of the United States suffered through shortages and rationing then, and, when this article is published, we may be going through similar antics—but in peace time. Our peace-keeping efforts around the world seem to have ended with severe shortages of energy, materials, fertilizers, plastics and who knows what else!

Each golf course must assess its own position in this topsy-turvy world in which we find ourselves. It wasn't so very long ago that fairways were mowed with horse-drawn equipment. Many of us can still remember this era. Could it return? Before I try to answer, let me remind everyone that, when tractor fuel is scarce, gas and oil will be allocated first to food producers (farmers).

Fairways have been kept playable with horse-drawn mowers and with grazing sheep. I've played on woolly-cropped turf; it isn't so bad. Putting greens and tees have been magnificent when mowed with hand-pushed mowers. Most every superintendent, I hope, has kept his hand mower. With our expanding population and a high rate of unemployment, we should be able to find plenty of strong willing backs to push these mowers.

Automatic irrigation systems consume energy. When energy is in short supply, we may be irrigating less. With less water, we can expect fewer weeds. There will be less mowing during short rainfall periods. Turf-grass quality generally should not suffer.

Fertilizer is essential to the production of food. This is the first order of priority. Recreational turf will be far down the line when fertilizer

needs are subjected to allocation. Each golf course will be obliged to consider very carefully its fertilizer needs in its own order of priorities. The old concept of compost may be high on the list to keep putting greens puttable. (I've had a compost pile going since 1946.)

Chances are good that the total energy situation will get worse before it gets better. We can indulge in wishful thinking and hope and pray that alternative forms of energy will become available. Some people run their cars on gas produced from garbage and manures. In the Southwest there is solar energy going to waste. Why haven't we tapped that source before now? Hydrogen is the least polluting of all fuels. Why aren't we geared to using it?

I have to wonder how much energy is required to make artificial turf to cover a football field. Natural grass uses the sun's energy to produce playing turf. I think that football players will be glad when the playing turf gets back to nature.

I have a good hand mower. All I have to do is find a willing boy or man to push it (wish I could). I'll set it high, use very little fertilizer and not irrigate at all. Each of us will find a way to reduce our dependence on petroleum-based energy, I'm sure.

Q—We have several spring and stream fed lakes on our golf course. Could you suggest a way that we could use these bodies of water more fully during this period of shortages?

(Indiana)

A—A letter just received from Bill Lyons of Canal Fulton in Ohio gives us a clue. Consult your state fish and game commission, stock the lakes with fish and grow food for the members and for sale. We must

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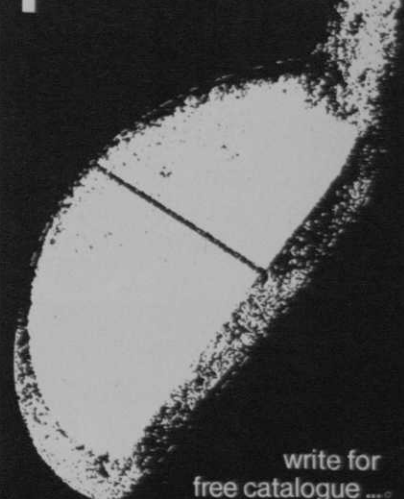
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learn to utilize every resource to the maximum and this is a fine way to begin. Fertilizer for golf turf might be in short supply, but I'm sure that you could get enough to fertilize food ponds.

Q—During World War II, many of our golf courses deteriorated severely because of shortages. Do you anticipate a similar situation in the months and years ahead? (Massachusetts)

A—No, I do not. For one thing, this is peace time, and we have an unemployment problem. There is no shortage of manpower to operate equipment.

Q—We fear that our public pay-as-you-play courses will suffer when people who want to play and who want to walk will not be able to get to the courses to play. We are resigned to storing our power cars to conserve energy. Do you have any thoughts on the situation? (Ohio)

A—With transportation curtailed, getting golfers to the golf course could seriously affect all operations at the club and could cut into incoming revenues. It might create new interest in car pools and in public transportation. Each course has its individual aspects of the general situation and should encourage group travel to the course by any mode of transportation.

Q—We are considering planting our 70 acres of fairways to a reliable strain of improved bermuda grass. How many bushels of sprigs would be required? Can you give us a reasonable accurate estimate of the cost? What would it cost to seed the fairways to Arizona common (hulled) bermuda? (Maryland)

A—Recently I had asked some of the same questions of my friend E. Ray Jensen of Southern Turf Nurseries, Tifton, Ga. He does a lot of contract planting (sprigging). He uses 300 bushels of sprigs an acre. The cost varies between \$300 and \$350 an acre, depending mainly on the source of sprigs and the variety. In your area, Tufcote bermuda is one of the favorite varieties. Arizona common seed at current prices (it may be higher) would cost about \$60 to \$75 an acre. Your main problem will be winterkill (or springkill), if

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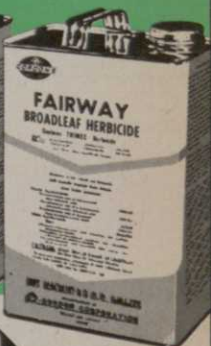
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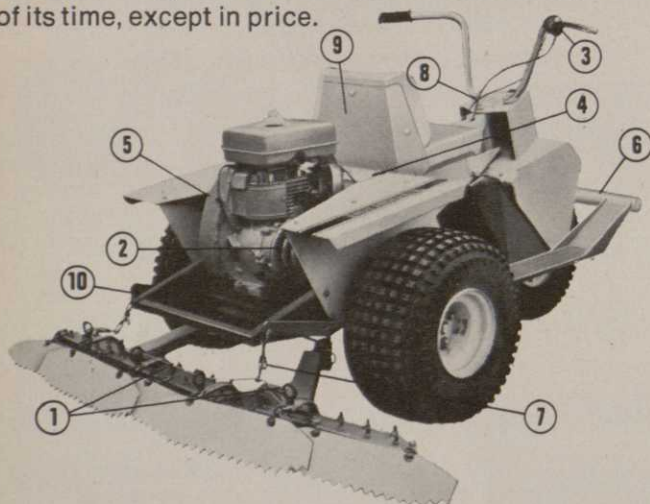
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we have the right weather conditions. This will be true with any bermudagrass in southern Maryland, but more severe with the Arizona common seed.

Q—Your *Q & A* in last February's issue on superintendents becoming managers has raised some serious questions. Members of our group disagree heartily with your concept of the relationships. Superintendents represent an honored profession, as do managers. We think that the two should remain separate and distinct with no crossover, even though many of us are trained both as turf managers and as businessmen. True, our profession does not have the glamour because our operations are removed from the hub of things. We are not proud when one of our "greenkeepers" moves to the other side and becomes a manager. None of us can condone consolidating "the two most important functions of the club." Any light that you can shed on the reasons for your position shall be appreciated.

(Illinois)

A—In considering your thoughtful and honest letter, I can't get my mind off some of my long-time "greenkeeper" friends who have become effective and honored club managers. The golf course superintendents who work with them enjoy a favored position, because they operate in conjunction with a manager who understands the problems of coping and working with nature. When a manager has technical and sympathetic understanding of golf course conditions, I see a harmonious relationship that is good for 1) the superintendent, 2) the manager and 3) the club.

When a superintendent gains the expertise to cope with a manager's problems and frustrations and goes into it with his eyes open, why should I oppose it? I see a gain for the superintendent.

I see no good reason for anyone to consider the "greenkeepers" as one faction and managers as another, continuously at odds. Why should not these two most important functions of a club be harmonious? Both serve the same club and the same members. This unwillingness to "give and take" does not seem to be in the best interests of those you serve.

I have no desire to change your way

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of thinking, especially because you endorse the views of one of your group who has been in print and is heartily opposed to any "crossover." You and he should never become managers because of your adamant stand on the subject. My advice to a friend to go ahead and become a manager has a sound foundation. He was ready and the club wanted him. For him the future is bright as is the future of the superintendent at the club at which both are employed.

My friendship for you and for those in your group who hold views similar to yours will in no way be diminished. I do not attempt to influence superintendents on any score, but when I see a situation that will benefit everyone, I exercise my prerogative to express my view just as one of your group published his.

Q—*This is not exactly a question, but more a plea for recognition. Ours is one of the more than 500 golf courses in the Commonwealth. Everyone in the club, members and employees alike, believe that our grounds were meant to serve a function beyond that of simply pleasing golf members. We like to feel that our club property is one of the best bird and wildlife sanctuaries around. The grounds crew is dedicated to serving this end. Naturally, no shooting, trapping or hunting is allowed on the premises. Should we not be accorded some recognition from the Game Commission, and, perhaps, receive suggestions on how we can improve conditions?* (Pennsylvania)

A—Bravo for your common sense approach to helping our wildlife. This should make a good story for a magazine. We will see to it that a copy of this issue of GOLFDOM reaches the Game Commission in Harrisburg. Keep up the good work. ☐

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