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Turf Work Guidance In Rhode Island Report

Report on experiments with turf grass at the
Rhode Island Station in 1942

By O. J. NOER

THE fifty-fourth Annual Report of the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station contained results of investigations on turf grasses for lawns, airports, fairways, and other similar areas. Dr. Jesse L. DeFrance was in charge of the work. Findings were reported under the following headings:

LAWNS AND LAWN GRASSES—The historic lawn grass plats, established in 1905 were abandoned because of labor shortage and the conviction that their further usefulness was negligible. The 37-year old project compared the effects of acid and alkaline fertilizers. Some plats received sulfate of ammonia, and others nitrate of soda, with and without phosphate and potash in both cases.

Weeds and clover disappeared like magic from the sulfate of ammonia treated plots, and turf remained weed-free. Thus, "the weedless lawn dream was realized by the discovery of a long sought fertilizer that would grow grass and kill weeds." The results obtained with sulfate of ammonia on these plats gave rise to the sulfate of ammonia, or acid era in turf management.

In recent years turf on the acid plats (pH 4.0) began to weaken, noticeably so after the winter season. Winter-kill or drying-out was observed first in the spring of 1938. Vigorous raking to remove dead grass helped restore grass that year, so there were no remaining bare spots by the end of the season. In 1939, 1940, and 1941 recovery was incomplete even with this treatment.

Raking revealed that at least three times the amount of dead grass and undecomposed clippings accumulated on the acid (pH 4.0) plats as on the alkaline (pH 7 to 8) ones. Even the moderately acid (pH 5 and 6) plats yielded twice as much undecomposed grass as the alkaline areas. Severe raking became necessary on the acid plats to remove the clippings and

dead grass that accumulated during the mowing season. It became apparent that grass on acid plats would die and disappear without a program of raking in June and September.

Organic matter accumulation, resulting in a "sod-bound" condition of the turf with consequent winter-killing, can be attributed in part to excessive acidity, and the lack of the lime needed to promote decomposition.

No dying-out of the turf, or excessive accumulation of undecomposed material was apparent on the neutral or slightly acid plats.

The action of certain chemicals used for weed control offered further evidence that turf on the acid plats was in a weakened condition. Sodium arsenite and lead arsenate severely damaged grass on the acid plats, but did very little or no harm on the neutral or slightly acid ones.

Turf on the alkaline plats became non-uniform and hence unsightly due to the invasion of weeds. The same amount of nitrogen was used on them as on the acid plats, but from nitrate of soda.

The slightly acid plats were satisfactory. A fertilizer containing both ammonium sulfate and sodium nitrate was used on them. Sulfate of ammonia, when mixed with an equal weight of lime was effective and superior to nitrate of soda. It is concluded that the continuous use of ammonium sulfate, or sodium nitrate is unadvisable.

The Piper, Merion and Kernwood strains of velvet bent planted in 1938 for comparison with Rhode Island bent and subsequently maintained at lawn length continue to appear superior. They have developed a turf of finer texture, greater density, and better color throughout the season. The velvets are less subject to weed invasion, they are more drought resistant and less susceptible to diseases, such as brown patch and dollar spot. After five years of similar cultural practice, these velvet bents appear to be satisfactory for lawn use and are also superior

to Washington strain of creeping bent, Kentucky Blue Grass, fescue and any mixture used on the lawn plats.

With velvet bent it appears best to remove clippings, especially during periods of lush growth in humid weather, to avoid smothering of the grass. Mowing at least twice a week is also advised. If velvet bent is allowed to grow tall and lodge it will smother the roots and die. If lawns planted with the improved strains of velvet bent are maintained with care and attention, studies indicate that the effort will be well worthwhile.

TURF FOR AIRPORTS—Tests were made on local airports. Bents, fescues, blue grasses, rye grasses, orchard grass, crested wheat grass and clovers, as well as five mixtures, were seeded in duplicate. Cutting was at 1½ to 2 inches. The ability of creeping red fescue to grow on soil considered far from ideal for turf, and the ability of newly planted velvet bent to withstand hot dry summer months were interesting observations the first year. Crested wheat grass started well, but did not survive the summer satisfactorily. Mixtures seeded at 50 pounds per acre did not give complete coverage the first year; at 100 pounds per acre plus 25 pounds perennial rye grass, coverage was excellent. Mixtures containing 5 percent white clover appeared superior. Provided there is no plane operating objection, its use would be of considerable benefit from the nitrogen usage standpoint.

FINE TURF AND TURF GRASSES—

On the closely clipped plots of pure single strain grass, selected strains of velvet bent continue to outrank the others. These plats are cut at ¼ inch with a power putting green mower. Color, texture, density, uniformity and disease resistance were the quality factors considered.

Disease prevention studies emphasized tests of new materials to replace mercurials. Sulfanilamid at the rates used appeared to stimulate rather than check brown patch and dollar spot. Wettable Spergon and Spergon-Dry gave variable results. The English Bordeaux mixture (1-5-50) plus one-half ounce of Auragreen gave good control of brown patch and dollar spot.

WEED CONTROL STUDIES WITH CHEMICALS—Young crab grass was easily killed in the two and three-leaf stages. Since crab grass has a prolonged germination period, many treatments were

necessary to eliminate the successive crops. It was considered advisable to determine a better time when fewer treatments would be needed. A practical time is the period of seed formation, when the pest is a tangled mass of bronzy, reddish-purple fingerlike seed-bearing stems. Crab grass is easily distinguishable at that time by anybody. Eradication is practical and comparatively inexpensive. Crab grass plants treated during the period of seed formation showed a very substantial decrease in the percentage germination of seed. The materials used included sodium arsenite, sodium fluoride, sodium chlorate, a mixture of sodium arsenite and sodium chlorate and some commercial products.

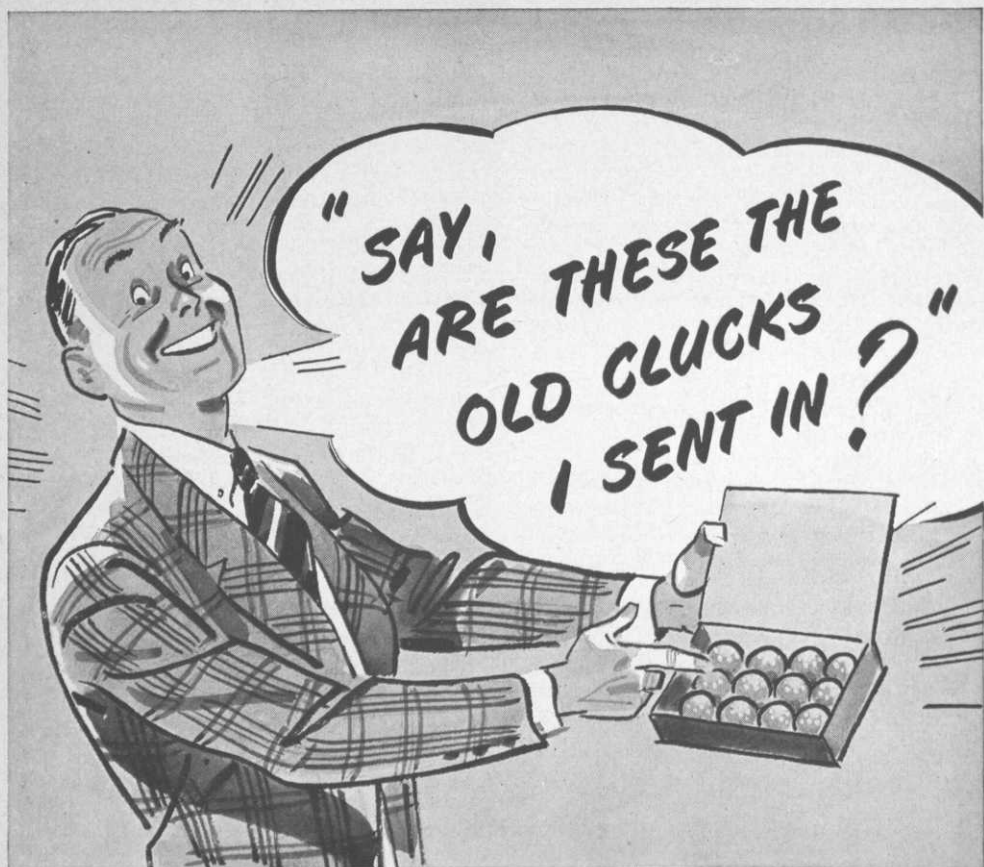
KILLING WEED SEEDS IN COMPOST BY THE USE OF CERTAIN FERTILIZERS AND CHEMICALS—In this work an efficient and economical method for the elimination of viable weed seeds in soil compost was sought. Previous methods of sterilization by steam electricity to generate heat, and by the use of chloropicrin were employed with varying success.

The object in this project was to use nitrogenous fertilizers and develop sufficient heat to kill seeds. Experiments were made using cardboard containers in the greenhouse, wooden bins in the compost shed, and finally in the compost pile itself.

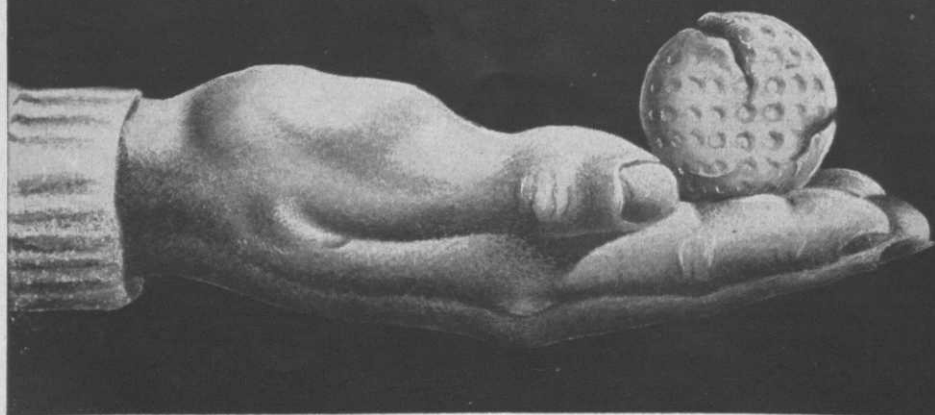
The materials used were cottonseed meal, Milorganite, Agrinite, calcium cyanamide, ammonium sulfate, and chloropicrin. Milorganite developed a temperature of 130 degrees F. at the rate of 15 pounds of nitrogen per cubic yard. With Agrinite, at the same rate, the maximum temperature attained was 105 degrees. Satisfactory kill of weed seeds was obtained with organic or inorganic materials. There was little or no rise in temperature with the inorganic sources. Hence it appears that some other factor besides heat is involved.

This method of sterilization is practical and economical. From the greenkeeper's standpoint, it means that needed fertilizer and top-dressing can be applied in one operation.

Club Party for Pro.—Charley McKenna, who started to work for Oak Hill CC, Rochester, N. Y., in 1905 as a caddie earning 15 cents a round, was given a testimonial dinner and a bonus check by a large and lively gathering at the club late last year. Since 1926 Charley has been the club's pro. Club officials and members glowed in paying tribute to Charley.



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RECRUIT

Northern California Golf "Better Than Expected"

By EDDIE EDWARDS

San Francisco Chronicle

A CHECK-UP on the golf situation in Northern California has revealed some interesting and encouraging facts. The game, both at private clubs and on public courses is in a quite healthy state, even better than might be expected under existing conditions.

The Northern California Golf Assn. lists 68 member clubs as 'active' and while several smaller clubs in the less populous districts have been forced to suspend operations this year, on the other hand three have reopened following reorganization. In addition, two others which shut down are open again but now on a pay-as-you-play basis and not affiliated with the association at present.

Oak Knoll became a naval hospital many months ago and Del Monte was closed with the establishing of a Pre-Flight school there. Two clubs, one an exclusive organization of the peninsula, reduced its course to nine holes, because of the upkeep problem due to the manpower shortage. In the case of the exclusive club, its action resulted in a heavy loss of members by transfer to neighboring clubs.

Generally speaking, the play at the private clubs in 1943 was about even with that for 1942. Some of the larger clubs report a slight increase, some a slight decrease, but the change would be less than ten percent either way. This, of course, takes into consideration daily, week-end and holiday play. Saturday and Sunday play remains about the same at the more prominent clubs.

The Olympic Club at Lakeside operating under circumstances differing from those existing at other clubs, reports a small drop in play by the golfing membership but, at the same time, an increase in play by members of the downtown club, who hold golfing privileges.

Sequoyah, in Oakland, reports a sharp decline in play, due to a gas rationing 'scare' early in the year but a steady increase since and that despite an increase in dues and green fee.

Play at the municipal courses in the San Francisco metropolitan area shows a slight drop, again speaking generally, but in the case of two cities, revenue is about the same or greater. San Francisco's Park Commission, for instance, reports that play at the two courses close in (Harding and Lincoln Parks) matches 1942 figures for Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays and off no more than five percent on weekdays. At the city-owned Sharp Park course 15 miles down the coast, week-end play has dropped five percent but by 50 percent through the week-days.

Green fees, however, are up about 25 percent and the monthly revenue has jumped approximately \$900, as compared with an estimated monthly increase of \$850 necessary to break even on operation costs.

Oakland's munny course (Chabot) and situated ten miles out reports a drop of 20 percent and anticipates a further decrease in ratio to any additional gas rationing slashes. But Chabot's loss has benefitted neighboring Berkeley's Tilden Park, the play shifting to that course, which is closer at hand for the players. Alameda's munny course, one of the busiest, reports that 1,908 fewer players turned out during the 1942-43 fiscal year but with a ten percent boost in green fees, the revenue drop was only \$55.

Wherever play has dropped, the sole reason has been gas rationing, but the golfers, themselves, through whole-hearted co-operation on share-the-rides arrangements at almost every course may take full credit for golf's existing state of well-being.

Women's golf has slumped, definitely, though I can give no figures. Most of the ladies are engaged in war work or relief activities in one form or another and only at Lakeside has their golf play remained on even keel. In several isolated cases, women's golf at private clubs has been discontinued.

As to golf for service men, arrange-

GOLF *in the* WAR

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"MANY AN HONEST HEART BEATS BENEATH A TATTERED COAT"

THAT's an old adage that holds true of golf balls today. Under many a badly battered, cut and bruised golf ball cover, hides a perfectly sound "heart" or center. And, believe it or not, it has come to a point in America's golf where this center in an old, badly cut golf ball may well be the salvation of golf in 1944.

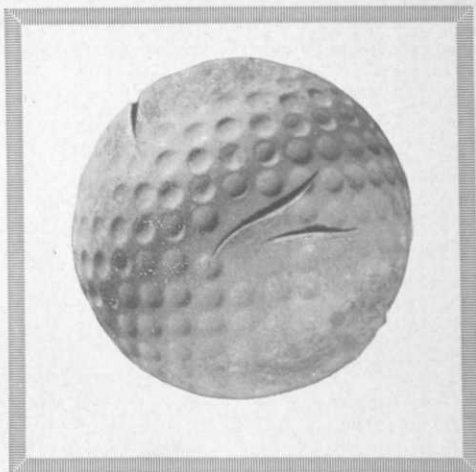
Some of us had high hopes that we might have new golf balls made with synthetic rubber this season.

But many experiments and tests have ruled this hope out. Synthetic rubber, as of today, will not do for golf balls. It's a fine product and it gives the Japs another sock in the eye. It's good for tires, and even goes great in tennis balls. But, it's not just right for golf balls.

So, this year more than ever, it's going to be up to those honest "hearts" of prewar crude rubber, beneath the tattered coats of many thousands of used golf balls, to save golf.

We've done everything that the printed word can do—and so have others—to make players and Pros see the vital importance of corralling these old discards with battered covers, and of seeing that they get to Pro Shops at once.

Over these stout "hearts" we build new golf balls. Where the center is damaged we build it up to specified size and accuracy.



Then, by our Wilson Accurated System, we give them brand new covers. The result is golf balls that will perform within a fraction of the prewar golf balls.

There are no two ways about it. Either these used balls are collected; either lockers, golf bags, homes, offices, etc. are combed for the old balls—or many Pro Shops and Dealers are going to be badly short of golf balls this coming season. And many players are going to be forced to give up the game.

So, any one reading this article who is interested in seeing golf go good in 1944, had better take this golf ball situation seriously.

Either the old, used balls are collected and turned in in great volume—that means every player digging out every last ball he can find—or golf will be mighty disappointing.

Anything you can do to further the drive for old, used golf balls will be for the good of golf in your immediate precincts and as a whole.

L. B. Icely, President
Wilson Sporting Goods Co.

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Arch Ward"**



TUNE IN ARCH WARD'S SPORTS PREVIEW

Every Wednesday Night

As an added feature in our service to America's sports lovers we are now presenting an outstanding sports personality and authority over a coast to coast Mutual Network—each Wednesday night (previous to January 5th the program was on Friday night).

This personality—known over the length and breadth of the land—is Arch Ward.

In his Sports Preview—each Wednesday night, at 10:15 P.M. Eastern War Time, Arch Ward gives America's fans the

latest facts and predictions on current sports events. His percentage of winning predictions during the past football season was way up in the top eighties. These Sports Previews mark the first appearance of Arch Ward on the air, with a sponsor. And Wilson has been widely complimented for being the first to bring him to the millions of sports fans in a sports-awakened America. Tune in Wednesday night and join the many, many thousands who make this Wilson-Arch Ward program a weekly habit.

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The "E" for Excellence in War Production

On December 15th, 1943, at a very impressive ceremony, the Army-Navy "E" Award (given only for excellence in war production) was presented to the loyal Wilson workers of the Wilson Athletic Goods Mfg. Co. at our Chicago Plant. This award is a fitting reward for the loyal work of these patriotic Wilson men and women.

But it has an even more meaningful significance than that. It actually affirms the fact that Wilson athletic goods must be considered *war* equipment—that sports equipment is a definite part of the vast war production that is helping our boys and our allies' boys blast the Japs and Nazis out of this war.

For three years we have been telling

the world and the leaders of this war that America's sports must be continued and even augmented for the physical fitness of our fighters, our pre-training youths and our people.

As we see the "E" banner floating over our Chicago Plant, and note the "E" emblems so proudly worn by our workers, we feel that our efforts have not been without success. America's sports are recognized today as a part of this war effort—much more so than at any time since Pearl Harbor—and sports equipment is now recognized as war production. Long live America's sports—including golf which is the sole source of relaxation, fresh air and exercise for millions of America's men.

IT'S WILSON TODAY IN SPORTS EQUIPMENT

ments vary with each club. At several of the private clubs here, the plan has been to grant use of the course to the first 12 service men turning up each day and unless the course is crowded, others may play without charge. Presidio Club, with a large membership of the military, has an open day each week. Across the bay, at Orinda, the membership includes some 75 men stationed at the Pre-Flight school, dues being half-rate and green fees waived. Sequoyah reports about 30 officers from Oak Knoll playing regularly.

At the San Francisco public courses, the practice has been to waive green fees for a dozen service men daily, scarcely a generous provision. A monthly tournament for service men, to be rotated on the three city-owned links was inaugurated in October by the AWVS and gives promise of developing into something worth-while.

The condition of golf courses around here may be classified as excellent, as good as 1942 and in a few cases even better though there has been little rain and the shortage of course labor is acute.

Tournaments have been suspended in a few instances, particularly women's events. Others have been reduced, both in length and time. For example, the state amateur was streamlined to five days, the qualifying round cut to 18 holes. The pros have been hit, too, for many are without assistants and press of business precludes much, if any tournament activity. About 30 percent of the Northern

California pros are employed on a full time basis. Most of the others are engaged in war work, for economic and patriotic reasons.

Golfers have given considerable time to Victory Gardens and while some clubs lack ground for elaborate layouts, one (California) has leased out and supplies water for 35 acres, all planted with vegetables. Lakeside has a three acre garden while at clubs in the East Bay, smaller gardens are producing.

The financial condition of most of the bay region's private clubs ranges from good to excellent. Membership lists are growing at those most prominent and it is the general belief of club and association leaders that the clubs have weathered their most trying times; those now operating will be even stronger after the war.

The golfers look to the future with optimism and while the threat of more drastic gas rationing hangs over the West Coast, it is also the opinion here that the game will suffer only in the event of some serious military reverse.

By and large, the players at private and public courses have been conserving at least enough of that allotment of gas permitted for pleasure driving to take them to and from their clubs. With the share-the-ride plan in general operation, there's no reason to believe the golfer within reasonable distance of a course will miss out on his recreation, even if given less gas.

Yanks in India Asked \$6.04 Per Golf Ball

PFC. JOSEPH D. ORCHARD, special service councilman of American air depot group in India, wrote the Wilson Sporting Goods Co. a close-up on the golf situation with Yank Army air forces. Said Orchard:

"Golfers in the American Army Air Forces stationed in India find it almost impossible to obtain golf balls. A few new balls are available in the near-by city at an exorbitant price of Rupees 20 (\$6.04) each. Reclaimed balls, sold by merchants here in India for Rupees 8 (\$2.40) each are in worse condition than those which were being sold by caddies before the war.

"Therefore, we are appealing to you directly to help make it possible for us to continue to enjoy this grand old American sport.

"Our golf club considers this strictly a business proposition and will pay for all balls you can send us (preferably re-processed balls).

"Attached you will find a score card of our course. With the help of Indian coolie labor we constructed this course in our spare time in four months. The layout may be quite different from the championship courses in the States, but we enjoy the course as though we were playing on Merion Cricket Club."

L. A. Young Spring and Wire Corp., parent corporation of the L. A. Young Golf Co., has issued a book describing war production jobs being done in its 11 plants. It's a highly interesting and impressive outline of tremendous achievements in a wide scope of war materiel manufacture.