

# Turf Reawakening Demands Experts to Meet Its Challenge

By H. B. MUSSER

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We are facing a situation today in the turfgrass field that is very likely to get worse before it gets better. Rapid development of interest in quality turf production has created pressures that will not be met until more determined and systematic effort is made to develop trained personnel than is presently evident.

Let's take a look at the picture. Industry has been quick to recognize the actual and potential market that the rapid expansion in turf production is creating. It is a poor year that does not see a dozen or more new chemicals developed specifically for use on turfgrass insects, diseases, and weeds.

The fertilizer trade is finally recognizing the tremendous potential for new business in the field of special turf formulas. In the last five years we have seen many of the largest companies in the business make a sincere effort to determine what is needed and to produce it.

Equipment manufacturers have been working overtime to develop new machinery and all sorts of gadgets. They hope these will meet the increasingly exacting demands for improvements that will do the more complicated jobs that a greater recognition of needs have created.

## Improved Varieties

The seed industry is seeing "the handwriting on the wall." There are still a lot of seed mixtures being made and sold on a purely competitive price basis. And there will be for a long time to come. But there are very few catalogs of the better companies that do not carry descriptions and recommendations for the use of improved varieties of turfgrasses which have been developed because of their superior vigor and quality, disease resistance or some other special character.

Landscape and golf course architects and contractors, more and more, are realizing the necessity of using the best possible materials and construction methods if they are to build a good reputation.

*This article is condensed from a speech made by Prof. Musser at the 29th annual turf conference held at Penn State University earlier this year.*

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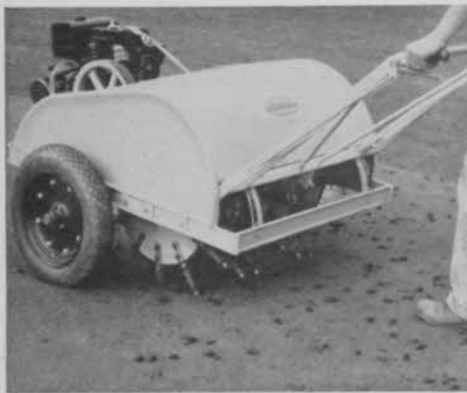
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Supervisors of parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and other public recreation areas are beginning to understand that there is a lot more to producing and maintaining a decent turf cover on them than merely buying fertilizers on a low bid basis, and depending on political appointees for management. Supts. of cemeteries and grounds surrounding industrial plants and public and private institutions appreciate that competent management is the best protection of their investment in the turf on these areas.

Highway departments are finding that a knowledge of production principles and practices is essential to both the quality and economy of cover establishment and maintenance on the thousands of roadside slopes, medials and interchanges of modern highways.

### Homeowners In It, Too

Home owners, in increasing numbers, are coming to a realization that good lawns don't just happen but are the result of the application of sound principles of production and care. If there is doubt of this, a check of the number of lawn samples received for testing each year by soil testing laboratories is very convincing.

And, finally, there is probably what is the most acute problem of all, — the plight of our golf courses. Figures compiled by the National Golf Foundation on new courses completed in 1959, and additional courses under construction or in the planning stage, point up the situation. If the normal number of supervision replacements needed on old courses each year due to retirement, death, and other causes is added to the requirements on the new ones, the total demand goes far beyond the supply presently in sight.

While this outline of the need and demand for specialized training in turf management has, of necessity, been brief, it should be sufficient to set the picture. Now, no one is so naive as to claim that there must be the same degree of training in all these fields, even though we could wish there was. But certainly, if one is going to manufacture and sell fertilizers, he must know how the basic principles of soil fertility and plant growth apply to this specialized crop. The same thing applies to the production of chemicals.

And, surely, the man who undertakes to write a set of specifications for turf establishment must have a background of training that enables him to evaluate the conditions with which he is concerned, and adjust soil preparation, fertilizer, lime, seed, and all the other essentials, to them.

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## Walter Cosby was Builder, Leader in Turf Experiment

Walter W. Cosby, 49, who died in Clifton Forge, Va., Hospital in March after a brief illness, had been supt. of the golf course at The Greenbrier Hotel, White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., since 1947. Before this he had held similar positions at the Homestead course in Hot Springs, Va. and at Army Navy CC in Arlington, Va. While at Army Navy, Walter's turf career was interrupted by service with the Army combat engineers. He spent 16 months in the ETO and at the conclusion of the war was assigned to supervising renovation of the bomb damaged Sportplatz in Nuremberg, Germany and the building of athletic fields for GIs.



### Student and Researcher

Walter studied at the N. J. College of Agriculture and did some work in agronomy at the University of Maryland. His education made him acutely aware of the value of research and experimentation. He is generally credited with being the first man to have run 2-4-D tests for weed control for the USGA green section and a decade ago he recommended using 2-4-5-T for clover control. At the time, this formulation was considered to be too powerful but in recent years, recommendations made by Purdue University, have supported Mr. Crosby's experimental use of the chemical. Walter also isolated a superior strain of bent from one of Greenbrier's greens and was developing it at the time of his death.

He did a great deal of advisory and consulting work in the construction of courses in Virginia, W. Virginia and Maryland, and at the time of his death was supervising construction of an additional 18-hole course at the Greenbrier. Mr. Cosby was a member of the GCSA and, at one time, served on its advisory committee. He also was a past pres. of the Mid-Atlantic GCSA.

He is survived by his wife, Sara, a son, James Walter, a student at Marshall College, Huntington, W. Va., and a brother, Charles E.

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## Grau's Answers (Continued from page 60)

### Fine-Texture Bermuda

Q. I am asking your opinion on the new fine-textured Bermuda, such as Tifton 328, Ugandagrass and any other that you would recommend in our vicinity. I am building a new 18-hole course and I am anxious to try one of the new Bermudas. I have pioneered with bent. I am sure that I can have good bent greens here but I would like to have one of the new fine-bladed Bermudas because I think there is a great future for these grasses. (Texas)

A. You will be able to grow perfectly satisfactory greens with the fine-bladed Bermudas such as 328 and Ugandagrass. The principal difficulty will be play during the winter. The Bermudas will go dormant and should not receive heavy traffic during the dormant period. This can be fatal where the traffic exceeds a certain maximum. If the course is closed during the winter, so much the better. There are excellent greens of Ugandagrass on a public course near Washington, D. C. that have been under heavy play for two seasons. The first season they were kept open for play and, in the spring, they were very slow in recovering. Some areas were killed. This winter the greens are closed and players are using temporaries.

The management of the fine-bladed Bermudas will not vary much from bents. They must be cut at 3/16 of an in. daily and will require high nitrogen fertilization. Excellent drainage is a "must." Phosphorus may be maintained at rather a low level, but potash feeding must be maintained at a level almost as high as nitrogen.

### Problem of Wilt

Q. Our biggest problem here is wilt. We follow pretty well accepted practices of the better courses in watering, fertilizing, etc., but during the summer months it is one endless job of syringing the greens. Is there something wrong with our Washington bent for this locality, or is it in our root systems? Perhaps you can suggest some reasons for the severe wilt that we are bothered with. (Indiana)

A. It is difficult to attempt to analyze your problem of wilt without knowing a great deal more about the details of watering, fertilizing and other phases of your management program. It may be that the roots are badly restricted by a layer of some kind. Perhaps the soil under the turf is too heavy and cannot drain well. Perhaps drains are plugged up. Certainly there is nothing wrong with Washington bent. It is one of the better ones, particularly for the hot summer months and, with a well-drained soil and good fertilization program, there should be little or no wilt.

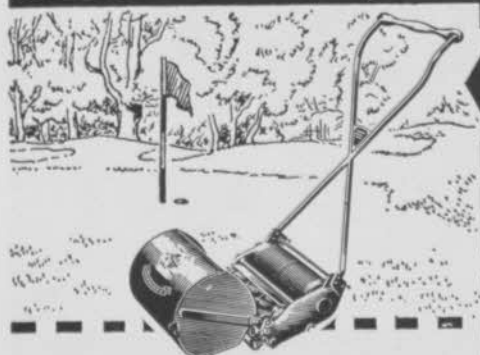
I recently talked to a man who has been through exactly the same kind of weather as everyone else, and he is very pleased with his trouble-free greens. He has good drainage, a good grass, and he fertilizes twice a year with a slow-release material. Nothing is added to the greens during the entire summer season from late spring until early fall.

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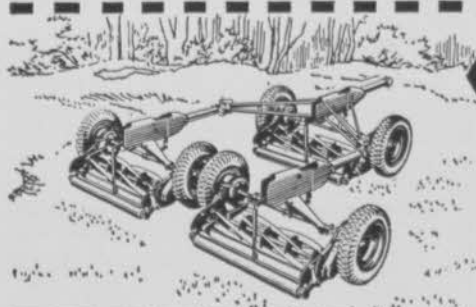
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### **Washington Junior Interclub League Continues to Grow**

The Interclub Junior League of Washington, D. C., which has grown from a handful of clubs in its starting year, 1956, to the present 18, is creating a great deal of interest in the Mid-Atlantic area. Intercity competition between Washington and Baltimore teams is expected to become a fixture this year and sponsors of the Washington league are hoping to see the competition catch on like Little League baseball.

In 1959, Kenwood won the Washington league for the second straight year, defeating Bethesda in the playoff. The number of Junior participants increased last year from 102 to 145 and included five girls who won a total of 11½ points for their teams. Two youngsters, George Shull and Doug Marriott, 13-year olds, had perfect scoring records for the season, neither having dropped a match. They represented Columbia CC.

The Washington loop is made up of four divisions. A total of six players in 16-17, 14-15 and under 14 age brackets represent each club. One point is scored for victory in individual matches and one

for best-ball, making it possible for a team to win nine points in a dual match.

Joe Gambatese of Kenwood CC is dir. of the Washington Interclub league. Royce J. Lea, Court House CC, is asst. dir. and W. B. Maroshek, Congressional, is treas. In order to help other cities organize Junior Interclub leagues, the Washington officials will supply information and their specialized scores sheet. These can be obtained from Gambatese, 7119 Exfair rd., Bethesda, Md.

### **Photos in Progress Report**

Supt. Don McKay of Hartford (Conn.) CC makes a progress report on construction with photographs displayed on a club bulletin board and used in the club magazine.

The club added 9 to the 18 designed by Donald Ross who, like McKay, was born at Dornoch. The additional 9 was built by McKay and his staff with comparatively little outside help and while maintaining the Hartford CC in fine condition.

The pictures show the members how much work is involved and keeps them satisfied that the club's facilities are being enlarged in the most modern manner.



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### Plan Maintenance Routine

*(Continued from page 56)*

in use before they have had a chance to mend. This is ideal for the building of soil compaction. Larger tees and greens are in order for this new area of golf play.

#### Expansion Pains

Golf is in a boom period. We all want to see it grow. This rapid and growing era of play is producing acute pains of expansion which is taxing playing facilities of our courses to their limits. Suitable property close to cities is not always available. Yet, the building of more courses is the logical answer. Perhaps playing memberships could be limited to a normal and comfortable capacity of play for the average layout. Where this is not possible or feasible an alternative plan must be found.

Golf courses that were built 15 or 20 years ago need to be redesigned so as to better accommodate the patronage they are now receiving. Tees and greens need to be larger, unnecessary trapping should be avoided. All hand labor should be reduced to a minimum. This means the establishment of easy grades that will permit machine operation. Equipment must be kept in a good state of repair and not be allowed to become obsolete; there should

be plenty of it, and it must be up-to-date. Water systems must be adequate to meet all requirements and demands placed on their installations.

#### Officials Responsibility

To sum up the picture: Club officials must begin to realize that the length of time required to keep courses properly groomed is of the utmost importance if existing playing requirements are to be met. The supt., if he is to keep pace with the times, must practice some foresight and ingenuity. His relations with the club membership need to be kept in a constant state of good repair. He has to successfully live with his fellow dept. heads, fully realizing that he should try to help them and expecting, in return, assistance from them.

#### Mascaro Heads PTC

Tom Mascaro of West Point Products Corp. has been elected pres. of the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council. He succeeds Joseph Gackebach, who takes over the duties of treas. Vp is Paul Leix, supt. at Allegheny CC, Pittsburgh, and secy. is H. B. Musser, professor emeritus of Penn State University