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GRAU'S Answers to Turf Questions

By FRED V. GRAU

Students of turfgrass deserve access to accurate information concerning the history and development of new strains and varieties of plants with which they will work in the years ahead. These data are not available easily at all times. Popular writings frequently garble the true identities of workers responsible for the development of varieties.

A case in point occurred recently on the radio during a garden-type broadcast. According to the information that was disseminated far and wide, Merion Kentucky bluegrass was developed by a man associated with a large garden supply house in the Midwest. A telephone call intercepted the radio personality and the facts were presented. A letter followed giving factual details. On the following Sunday (Easter) the record was set straight by a reading of my letter on the air.

A thumbnail sketch of Merion Kentucky bluegrass reads thus:

1935—Joe Valentine selected a promising strain at Merion Golf Club. John Monteith, pathologist for USGA Green section, designated this strain B-27 (27th in a collection of bluegrasses) and planted it at Arlington Turf Gardens.

1940—All grasses were moved to Beltsville to make way for building the Pentagon.

1945—Fred V. Grau, named Director, USGA Green Section, started weeding out the bluegrasses. B-44 was selected as No. 1, B-27 as No. 2.

1946—B-44 was hit hard with rust; B-27 OK. B-27 plot destroyed by a careless workman.

1947—listed as date of release in Agr. Handbook 170. Seed sent to Geary in

Oregon for increase.

1948—A few seeds from Ed Geary in Oregon were sent to Penn State for increase and purification. Breeder seed for the production of Foundation and Certified seed was produced both at Penn State and under Musser and at Beltsville under Grau. B-27 was known to be a low seed producer. Seed producers preferred B-5 and B-12 which were heavy seed yielders.

1950—The name "Merion" was given to B-27 by a committee of USDA and Green Section personnel to commemorate its place of origin. There were 20,000 lbs. of seed available in 1950.

A popular article on Merion (unauthorized) in a national magazine forced the release of Merion two years before seed stocks were adequate. This created a demand for an item that was in very short supply which forced prices to exaggerated levels.

Another case in point involves the popular no-maintenance groundcover legume, Penngift crownvetch (*Coronilla varia*). A thumbnail sketch of its brief history reads thus:

1905—introduced as impurity in imported alfalfa seed planted on Gift farm in Berks County, Pa.

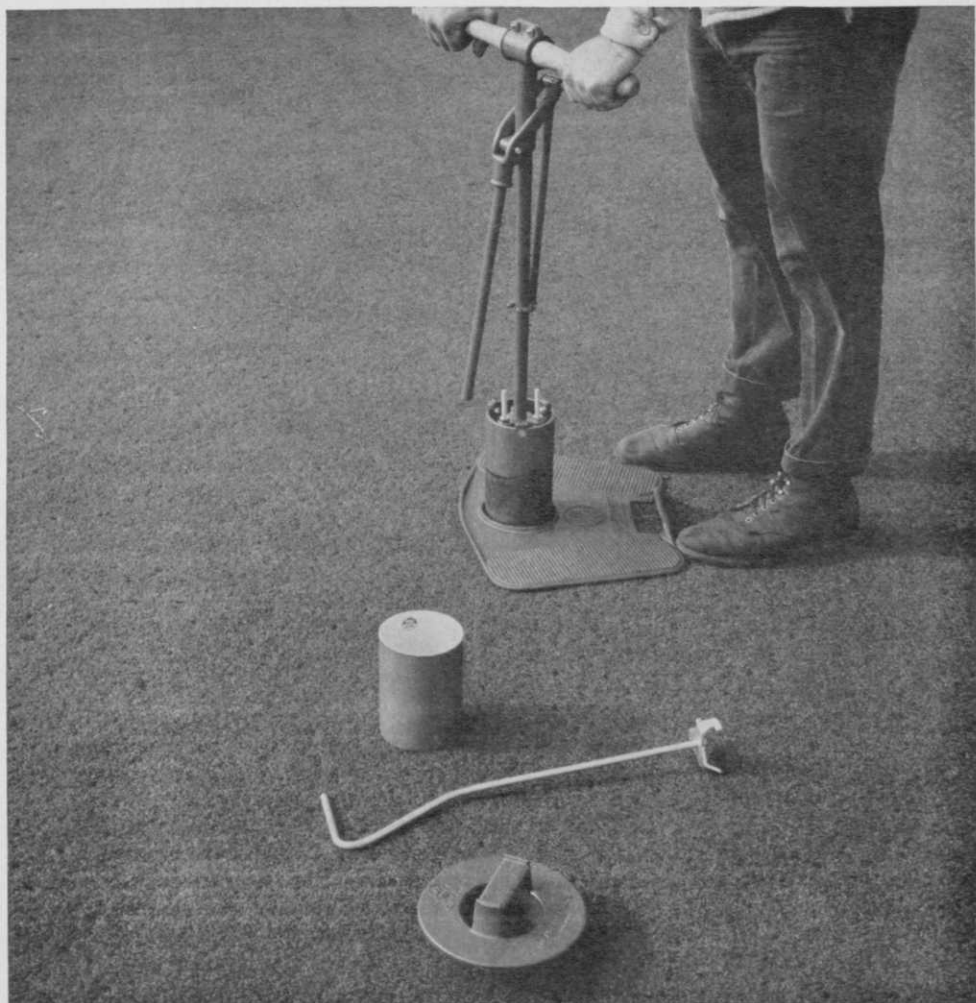
1935—discovered by Fred V. Grau, then extension agronomist for Penn State.

1940—seeds from Gift farm were hand collected and planted by Fred V. and Anne F. Grau for seed production on their farm, Grasslyn, near State College, Pennsylvania.

1946—first seed harvest at Grasslyn by methods other than hand plucking.

1947—cooperative research on crownvetch started by Pennsylvania Depart-

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DEPT. G

'Parked' car kills golfer

Manufacturer's warranty of fitness of product for intended use extended to bystander by Connecticut court.

By WILLIAM JABINE

An unusual fatal accident on a Connecticut golf course gave a court of that State an opportunity to take a forward step in the development of the law. It concerns a manufacturer's warranty of the fitness of his product for its intended use. This case extends the guaranty in line with a trend of recent years which gives increased protection to the general public.

The Superior Court, New Haven County, which made the ruling, describes the accident as follows: "This is an action for damages arising from injuries which resulted in the death of Burnell R. Mitchell, the decedent of the plaintiff executrix, allegedly caused by the defendants Nancy Backman, her father Horace G. Miller, Wallingford Country Club, Inc., and General Motors Corporation.

"The allegations in the first count are based on the negligence of the defendants Wallingford Country Club, Horace G. Miller and Nancy Backman. In substance, the first count sets forth that the defendant Nancy Backman had parked a car upon the parking area of the defendant Wallingford Country Club, which parking area overlooks the seventeenth fairway of the golf course of said defendant country club.

"The car, a 1962 Buick automobile, had been manufactured by defendant General Motors and was parked on a slope overlooking said fairway and so left there by defendant Backman who was driving the car as a family car of the defendant Horace G. Miller.

"In parking the car, the defendant Backman placed the hydromatic transmission gearshift lever in the area

designated 'park' on the indicator and locked all of the doors of the car. Despite the fact that the automatic hydro-matic gearshift mechanism was placed in the area marked 'park' on the indicator, the shifts were not locked therein and the transmission was only partially engaged.

"Being parked on an incline, the transmission became disengaged, and the shift lever slipped into the 'neutral' position, thereby allowing the automobile to roll. The car so parked rolled down the incline, striking the plaintiff's decedent, Burnell R. Mitchell, while he was playing golf upon the seventeenth fairway, with such force as to cause injuries from which he died."

The second and third counts of the complaint were directed against General Motors and alleged that the accident was caused by the negligence of General Motors in manufacturing a defective car, and that General Motors through its extensive advertising had warranted to the defendant Miller and to the public generally that the car was safe and fit for its intended use.

To these allegations General Motors filed a demurrer, a pleading which contends that the plaintiff had not alleged a legal cause of action. The demurrer contended that there was no privity of contract between the man who was killed and General Motors. The privity of contract theory, which prevailed for many years, denied the right to sue on an implied warranty of fitness of merchantability to anyone who had no contractual relationship with the defendant who was sued. In other words, in the case of a car, the buyer of the car had

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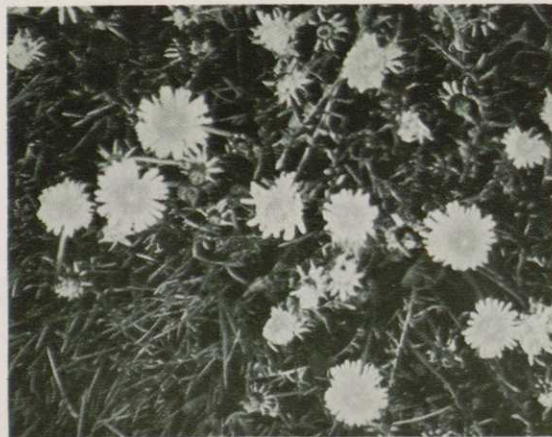


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From Bermuda grass to bent

By VERNE FLOYD

Photos by the author

Twelve years ago in North Carolina not a single golf course east of the mountains had bentgrass greens for year round play. Today in the Piedmont and Sandhills of the state some 21 courses have all greens in bentgrass. In this transition zone of the mid-south it has long been argued by a few proponents of the cool-weather grasses that this area could have successful bent greens and it is beginning to look like these few are winning their point.

Although the first course (Pinebrook Country Club, Winston-Salem) went all the way with bent greens 12 years ago, it has been only in the last six years that the majority of the courses established

these grasses using bent. One factor causing the change of grasses and management of golf greens may for the most part be attributed to the dissatisfaction of the players waiting for Bermuda grass to take over following rye and other temporary winter grasses. Much has been written about why the dormant Bermuda grasses died out in spots. Actually the main topic for discussion about golf greens centered around these bare spots which in some places never fully covered until August or about 6 weeks before seeding again to winter grasses.

Another most important economic factor influencing the change to bent grass



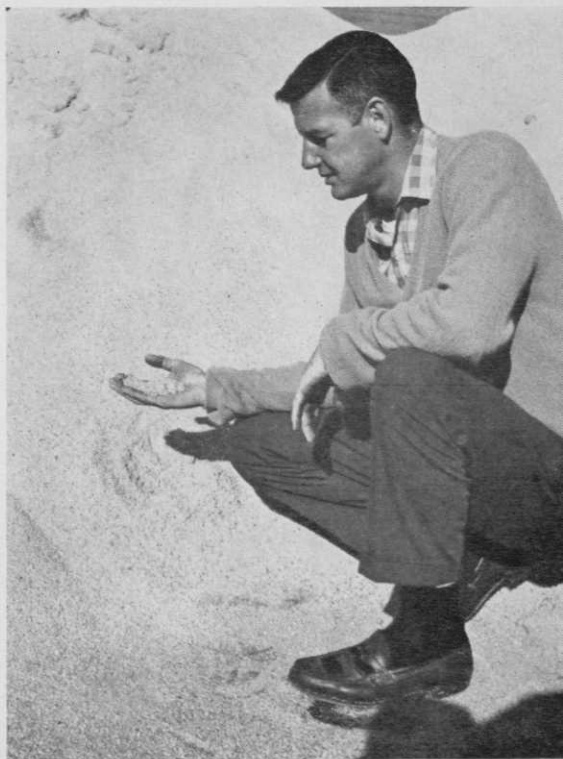
Brushes on mowers used at Carlson Farms. These improve appearance of bentgrass, are used on most Penncross greens in N.C.

The trend towards bentgrass greens in the 'Transition Zone' seems very successful.

must have been the cost of playing better greens elsewhere during the changover twice per year; cost of seed, topdressing and sleeping pills for the golf course superintendent.

Today in visiting the Golf Superintendents who manage bent grass greens in the marginal areas there appears with few exceptions a feeling of greater security among them than we have found in visiting the same men while they managed Bermuda greens. However, at one golf course it appears that the mistake of planting T-328 Bermuda on the fringes of all greens resulted in the Bermuda engulfing the C-1 and C-19 bents. Whereas this course has enjoyed

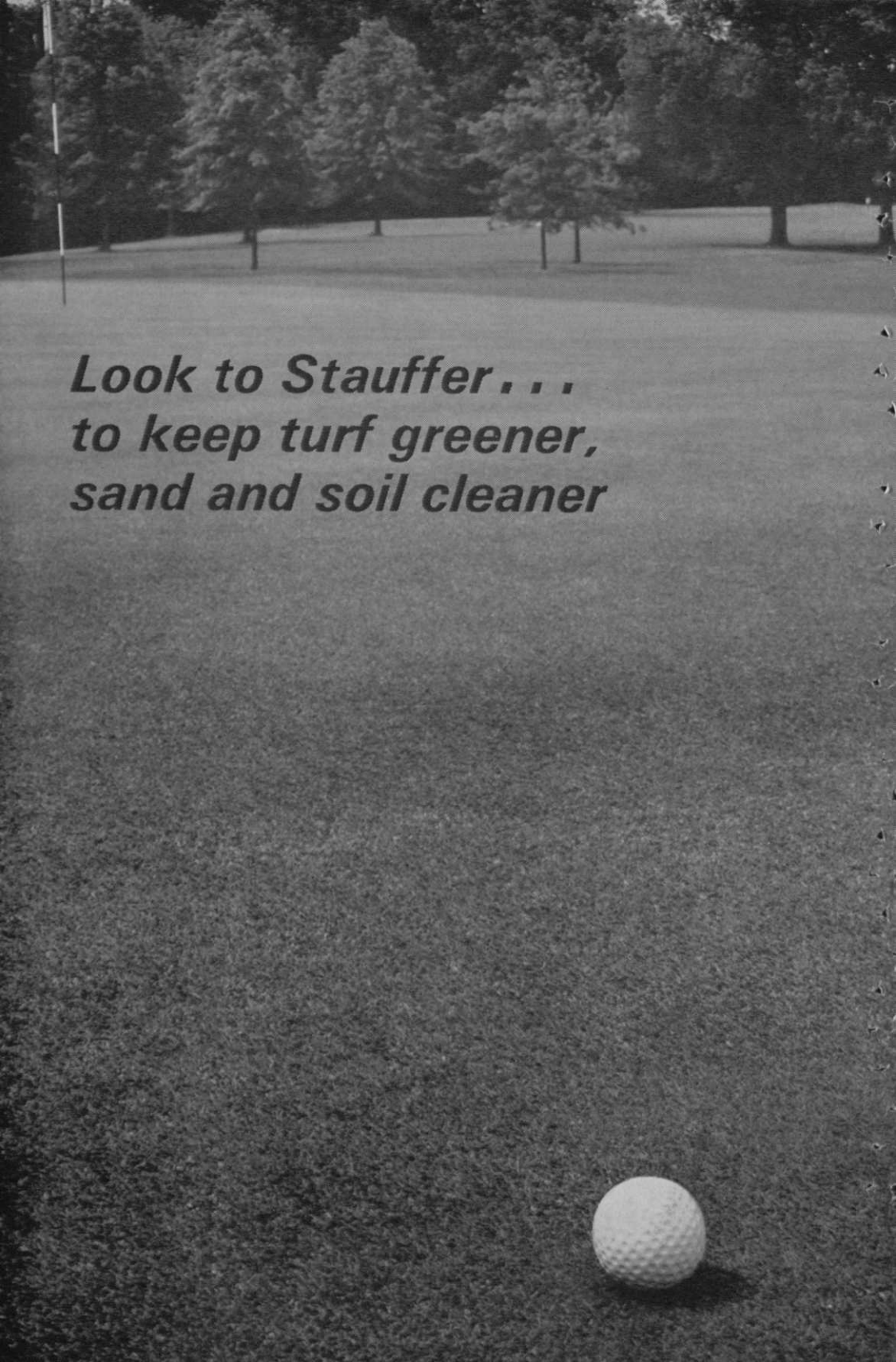
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Supt. Withrow shows sharp, coarse sand used to make up greens, traps and in topdressing.



Green planted 12 years ago to C-1 to C-19 stolons. Light areas are Bermuda covered with Poa Annuua, problem on several courses.

A black and white photograph of a golf course green. In the foreground, a white golf ball sits on the grass. The middle ground shows a well-maintained green with a flagstick on the left. The background features a line of trees and a white fence or barrier. The overall scene is a typical golf course setting.

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CHEMICALS

BENTGRASS TO BENT

Continued from page 27

fine play on bent for a good number of years the time has now come that the greens are over 50 percent Bermuda.

Common Bermuda planted well back from bent fringes does not encroach so rapidly as the T-238. Also the common Bermuda is coarser and can more readily be seen and controlled during the growing season as it enters the bentgrass. For the Piedmont region, Bermuda will likely remain a control problem.

Summer fungicide applications to bentgrass greens far exceed the costs and care in so maintaining Bermuda grass. The same may be said of the irrigation comparison due to the frequency of watering

necessary for bent.

Homer Withrow, golf course superintendent at Carlson Farms Country Club, Greensboro, N. C. sizes up the situation for successfully growing bent by saying that "first of all we must have a good foundation with adequate drainage to grow it, along with sufficient water. It being understood of course that essential practices of thatch control, spiking, aerifying, spraying and brushing must go on."

Fred MacKey, a golf course supplier from Richmond, Virginia said in 1945 that golf courses in the area described should all be using bentgrasses, and Ellis Maples, in building Pinebrook Country Club in 1954 started the trend.

Supt's with bent green's agree—water must be there when needed.

