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THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE OF GOLF

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ARTICLES

- THE PUBLIC COURSE "CRUNCH"** 84 per cent of the golfers on 56 per cent of the courses is one of the surprising facts uncovered by an recent ngf study on public and municipal course facilities _____ **20**
- WHAT MAKES A PGA PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR?** warren smith believes in service above all / by jerry claussen _____ **28**
- PRO ON THE WAY UP** big ideas and a sure-fire formula for success have created a winning combination for roger maxwell _____ **36**
- 33 WAYS TO BOOST CLUB INCOME** revenue-producing ideas that are inexpensive and effective / by john philip bachner _____ **43**
- WHAT'S BEHIND THE SEED PRICE SITUATION?** the author interlocks the pieces of the seed price puzzle / by fred b. lederboer _____ **48**
- PROJECT '74: A BIT OF WILDERNESS ON THE COURSE** golf courses make ideal sites on which to create wilderness acres / by fred v. grau _____ **52**
- COMPUTER CHECKUP: PRESCRIPTION FOR SLOW PLAY?** there is now a computerized golf course simulator designed to determine new, existing or renovated course capacity / by stephen w. byers _____ **61**

SPECIAL PRO SECTION

- THE PROFESSIONAL APPROACH** / by patrick d. williams _____ **34A**
- WINGS OF GOLF** the traditional wing-tip golf shoe takes on new importance with the return to the classic look / by dick farley _____ **34B**
- MERCHANDISE AND MARKET TRENDS** / by dick farley _____ **34F**
- PRO SHOP PROBLEM SOLVER** _____ **34H**

DEPARTMENTS

- NEW PRODUCTS** _____ **59** **CLASSIFIED** _____ **64**
NEWS OF THE INDUSTRY _____ **60** **ADVERTISER'S INDEX** _____ **66**
PEOPLE IN THE NEWS _____ **66**

VIEWPOINTS

- TURFGRASS RESEARCH REVIEW** / by dr. james b. beard _____ **6**
GRAU'S ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS / by fred v. grau _____ **9**
SWINGING AROUND GOLF / by herb graffis _____ **17**

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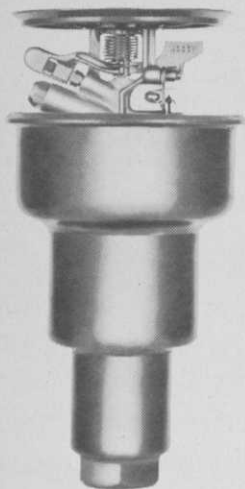
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DR. JAMES B. BEARD

TURFGRASS RESEARCH REVIEW

ZONATE EYESPOT ON BENTGRASS: A FUTURE PROBLEM?

A patch disease of two bentgrasses caused by Drechlera Gigantea. N. Jackson and J. M. Fenstermacher. 1973. Plant Disease Reporter 57(1): 84-85. (from the Department of Plant Pathology-Entomology, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I. 02881).

The occurrence of a zonate eyespot type of disease on Kingston velvet bentgrass and Exeter Colonial bentgrass was reported by the authors. The turfs on which the disease developed were mowed at a cutting height of 0.25 inch and were located on the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station at Kingston. The disease was first observed during August and September of 1972.

The general symptoms of this disease involve irregularly shaped patches ranging in size from two to nine inches in diameter. The initial symptoms on leaf blades appear as small, yellow lesions, which rapidly develop into a complete yellowing of the entire blade, followed by withering and browning symptoms. The blighted patches were composed of high concentrations of these affected leaves. The symptoms were comparable on both the Kingston velvet bentgrass and the Exeter colonial bentgrass plots.

The typical zonate eyespot lesions previously observed on creeping bentgrass were observed only occasionally on the individual leaves of these two bentgrass species. The causal organism of this disease was confirmed by laboratory cultures.

Comments: Zonate eyespot has been most widely reported to cause disease problems in bermudagrass turfs. It has also been reported to occur on creeping bentgrass turfs, particularly in the

midwestern United States, although it is much less of a problem than on bermudagrass. Zonate eyespot is most common during warm, wet weather.

This paper gives the first report of this disease and its associated causal organism on colonial bentgrass, cultivar Exeter. It also produced serious disease injury on adjacent turfgrass areas of Kingston velvet bentgrass.

Zonate eyespot has usually only occurred in limited, localized outbreaks on the bentgrasses. Whether it will become a more serious problem on these two new cultivars, Kingston velvet bentgrass and Exeter colonial bentgrass, remains to be seen.

The chances of a turfgrass breeder developing a cultivar that is resistant to all known diseases is very unlikely. Frequently, a newly-released cultivar will have improved resistance to one or more of the more serious diseases on that species. After the newly-released cultivar is in use over a wide range of conditions for an extended period of time, it may prove susceptible to (a) a new disease(s) or (b) a different strain(s) of a disease-causing organism that has not been a problem in the past on other cultivars of that species. The chance of this occurring is less or at least it will be less likely to be a serious problem, if a number of different cultivars and species are used in a specific region rather than only one. For this reason, it is advantageous to have a number of improved cultivars being developed and used.

The best procedure for the golf course superintendent to follow is to keep up-to-date and knowledgeable on the performance of newly released cultivars. By doing this, he will be better able to select a cultivar or blend of cultivars that will have the least disease problems for the specific turfgrass area to be established. □



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DR. FRED V. GRAU

ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

TURF IS PART OF AGRICULTURE

In these times of shortages and crises, I sense an effort in some quarters to discredit and devalue the importance of turf in the economy of this country. It is true, and members of the turf industry are among the first to admit it, that turf is not as important as the production of food. In dollar value, however, turf is crowding food production for top honors. Remember the 1966 Pennsylvania Turfgrass Survey? Those figures were authentic and startling.

Recreation on turfed surfaces has become as much a part of our lives as driving, eating and sleeping. The health of a nation such as ours is closely associated with recreational activities. Golf, for example, is one of the activities that keeps our lawmakers in trim (Burning Tree, Congressional, Columbia, Soldiers Home and others). Golf is played on turf during the daytime. The energy that is used is mostly the players' and what it takes to get them there and back to the home or the office.

No official in his right mind would have the temerity to deny needed turfgrass facilities access to enough energy to maintain turf so that it can be used for recreation. We are talking now about "minimum" maintenance during the energy chaos, not "spit-and-polish" upkeep.

Golf courses may be making hay from the roughs, which will ally them with food production. No one should be surprised to see sheep grazing all night every night on the course to keep the grass cropped to save energy and produce food. How many players have played on wooly-grazed turf? Aside from a few loose, rounded impediments, the playing surface is remarkably good.

In the concept of soil building, soil

conservation and reduction of erosion, turf plays an important part. In these respects, turf is agriculture. No one can deny that living sod is a great purifier. It absorbs airborne impurities; it filters water as it percolates downward; it is one of world's best solar-powered air conditioners. Turf is one of the most efficient users of lime and fertilizer. Turf is in an even better position to utilize "used" water, such as sewage effluent, than are farm crops. By recycling "dirty" water, we can conserve potable water.

I have been, and still am, a farmer, and I have been a golf course superintendent. I stand firmly on the premise that farming and food production are closely allied to turfgrass establishment and management. The one is to nourish our bodies; the other is to sustain our minds, as well as to keep our bodies fit. Together, we have the complete equation for a healthy, vigorous population. Let's keep them going forward together.

Q—If we should decide to graze sheep on our golf course, we will have some questions. What breed, how many, how to contain them? We are willing to give it serious consideration, if this threat of energy scarcity gets worse. Of course, we'd rather not be bothered. (Pennsylvania)

A—The first step to take before making any firm commitment is to go to the county agent and ask his advice. He may throw you out, but then again, he may listen. Every state experiment station has a sheep specialist who is qualified to answer just about every question you can ask about sheep. He may tell you 1) to forget the whole crazy idea, 2) loose dogs will raise hell with the dumb woolies, 3) chemicals you use will kill the little beasts,

continued on page 12

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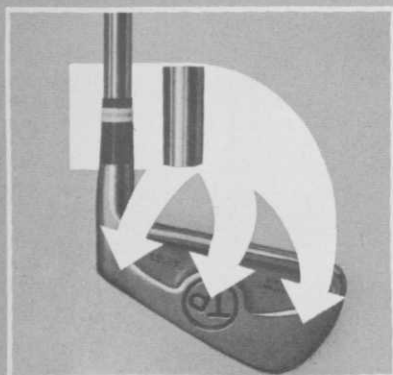
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