



TWO BOOKS YOU'LL WANT TO OWN

By Monroe S. Miller

Two new books of value and interest to golf course superintendents (and lots of others, too) made it to the marketplace in early 1995. *Diseases of Turfgrasses* (Third Edition) by Dr. Houston B. Couch (Krieger Publishing Company; Malabar, Florida. 1995) and *The Spirit of St. Andrews* by Dr. Alister Mackenzie (Sleeping Bear Press; Chelsea, Michigan. 1995) are as different as night and day, but both will have enormous appeal all across our business. Let me say at the outset that both have my highest recommendation.

I have said it myself and have heard untold others also say "that book was so good that I couldn't put it down until I had read every page." Well, that is nearly the literal truth with this truly wonderful volume written by the world famous golf course architect (Augusta National, Crystal Downs and Cypress Point, to name a few) — Dr. Alister Mackenzie. *The Spirit of St. Andrews* is simply a great book.

Do not purchase this book if you think it is strictly focused on golf course architecture. There is lots of that, of course. But Dr. Mackenzie covers every topic related to golf, as well as some that are not. It is page after enjoyable page of good humor, common sense and sage advice for any reader, but especially for people who love golf. His commentary is blunt and pretty near the mark most of the time. That is remarkable, given that it was written in 1933. It is also a remarkable and valuable period piece that will add to the richness of golf history.

This is a "lost manuscript" that has been hidden for sixty-two years. The son of Mackenzie's stepson found it in family papers tucked away in a trunk for all these years. The GCSAA played a role in getting the book published — but I have no details on that role. Our association logo is on the front of the book's jacket.

The book has some great old photographs you will enjoy. And it is organized such that you can pick it up and read awhile, put it down and come

back to it at a later time without losing your place or having to go back to reread.

The story telling and commentary give you the feeling that you have been carrying on a conversation with the author. This style has a lot to do with the appeal of the book.

Golf course superintendents will love chapter 5 (*Greenkeeping*), the section on trees, his 13 principles of an ideal course, and his comments on slow play (he was appalled that it was taking three hours to play an 18-hole round in the days when he wrote this!). It is impossible to note all you will enjoy and the innumerable parts you will be able to relate to directly. So you will have to read it for yourself!

I predict this book will be a best-seller in the world of golf literature. This advice from me is foolproof — get this book into your library. It could be your favorite, too.

The third edition of Dr. Couch's book *Diseases of Turfgrasses* is an enormous work. His books sort of mark the long and productive career of this world recognized grass disease scientist and expert. The original edition came out in 1962; many young Wisconsin golf course superintendents weren't even born yet, and even I was only a sophomore in high school! The second edition was printed in 1973, the first year I was a golf course superintendent, and the latest is now ours in 1995. Few will be able to lay claim to the prominence and presence Dr. Couch has had for so long.

Randy Witt and I waited in line together in San Francisco to get Dr. Couch's autograph in our books. What a pleasant experience! He was fun to talk with, he personalized each book and engaged us in some genuine and sincere conversation. I had taken my second edition book with me and he signed it, too.

But enough of the sentimental. The fact is that this book is a must for a superintendent's library. It is a thorough and complete record of all the

diseases we deal with in our business of growing golf turfs. Although it has the format and heft of a textbook, I found the style of writing very readable, indicating I will probably make use of it as more than just a reference book.

So detailed is the work in this edition that some chapters are, or seem, as long as the entire previous edition. Maybe that is just an indication of the growth of the field of turfgrass pathology.

The color plates of the diseases are the best I have seen and look as though they could be real helpful as a diagnostic aid.

It is an entirely different book from Dr. Joe Vargas' *Management of Turfgrass Diseases* (second edition). As the titles may indicate, the Vargas book offers plans, programs, rate recommendations and all kinds of advice in the control of diseases. Dr. Couch's book, on the other hand, offers no recommendations on specific rates of specific fungicides for specific diseases, instead offering materials and strategies that have shown results. Details are for you to find out from, I would guess, labels and other books and colleagues and land grant university extension plant pathologists. I do not feel that is a shortcoming of the book, however.

The paper quality, the font selection, the photographs, all graphics and artwork, and the page size are the best. This book exudes quality. Although it is expensive, the book is still a bargain and a resource we all should have. It also gets my highest recommendation.▼

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Contact: Randy Witt
Oneida Golf and
Riding Club
(414) 498-6503