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Another scolding and a whole lot of questions!



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The 1990 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium

A Silver Anniversary

By Al Nees

October 30th and 31st, 1990 will mark a rather historic date as the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium convenes for the 25th consecutive year. Often called the "highlight of Wisconsin's golf year", this two-day educational session employs a true symposium format. Lectures are structured to study one aspect of golf turf management in depth. It is, and has been, the only true golf turf symposium in the country.

The Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium has not only been a local benefit; golf course superintendents from all over the United States and Canada have shared our experiences. The symposium is co-hosted by the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Milorganite Division of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage Commission.

We thought it might be of interest, in this anniversary year, to look back over the past twenty-five years and chronicle some of the changes in how we prepare, manage and maintain golf turf.

The list of Symposium topics gives an indication of some of the problems we have faced in the past. It's interesting to note that several of the topics have been hashed and re-hashed. Of particular note would be *Poa annua* (1968, 1976 and 1983) and sand (1974, 1980 and 1981), it makes you wonder if we'll ever get it right!

Soil and plant interactions received much attention, particularly early in Symposium history (1967, 1970, 1973, 1974 and 1982). Environmental issues also have had prominence throughout the years (1972, 1988 and 1989) as well.

The roster of speakers who have participated in the Symposium over the years is impressive, to say the least. Just scan the list for a moment and consider the collective technical expertise and practical experience presented for our benefit. Academic and research staff at our country's colleges and universities, men like Beard and Daniel and Love and Waddington, helped write the "book".

The support of the United States Golf Association in Lardner, Hannigan, Bengeyfield, Boatwright, Holmes, Zontek,

Record, Griffin and our own Jim Latham has been invaluable.

Golf course architects like Geoffrey Cornish, Robert Trent Jones, Pete Dye, Dick Nugent and Ken Killian not only have affected Wisconsin golf directly, but worldwide.

Of course, the practical knowledge gained from other golf course superintendents like Sherwood Moore, Mel Lucas, Ted Woehrle and John Stampfl can help guide us when faced with similar circumstances on our golf courses.

There are two points I want to make in closing. First, the topic of the 1969 Symposium embodies what I believe to be the essence of what we in the golf turf business really do — satisfying the golfer. This is true whether grooming a private club golf course, dealing with problems on a public course or providing relaxing playing conditions on a resort golf course.

The key to satisfying the golfer has little to do with how fast the greens are, how long the rough is or how short the fairways are. Ultimately, the key lies in our ability to communicate. Only by effectively communicating with club officials, membership committees and course owners can we really understand what they want out of the golf course.

Secondly, I also believe the beauty of the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium lies in the single topic format. Understand that there is no one universal recipe that each golf course can employ to produce top-notch results. None of the distinguished speakers can, from behind the podium, provide a "canned" program to guarantee a good golf course. However, by taking a complete look at one aspect of turfgrass management, they can make us think.

Most of the up-to-date information on a specific topic is presented to us from several viewpoints. This gives us a chance to evaluate the information relative to our individual operations. We can weigh the pros and the cons before implementing the programs.

The topic chosen for the 25th anniversary Symposium is "Bentgrass — New, Old, Right or Wrong." We hope to

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