



# MID-ATLANTIC News Letter



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## WAS SMOG RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT TURF LOSS OF 1973?

Richard Anderson, Superintendent  
Burning Tree Club

With a record number of air pollution alert days in 1973 and the majority of fine turf grass areas under stress during this period the effect of direct sunlight on grass became very evident. Smoke, smog, and clouds can screen out a large majority of the sun's rays from reaching the earth's surface. With the absence of direct sunlight, a noticeable difference in the grass plant can be observed in just a few days. Photosynthesis will be greatly reduced and the grass plant will have to utilize its carbohydrate reserve. I believe this happened this year in that the smaller, younger leaf blades were shadowed by the larger, more mature blades and they had to rely on the outer leaf blades for carbohydrates. This in turn weakened the entire stand of turf. With a continued screening of the sun's rays from smog, the underlying or shadowed leaf blades eventually died. Having utilized most of the carbohydrate reserve from the entire plant the outer or exposed leaf surfaces were weakened and the quality and vigor of the turf was lost.

The stomates on the leaf blade do not open as wide because of this sun screen and the transpiration rate of the plant is reduced. This allows irrigated water to remain near the surface longer than desired and now, we have the already weakened plant also under water stress. Air spaces in the soil decreased so the lack of available soil air prevents the plant from taking up water and we have in a sense created wet weather wilt in a time of drought.

With the turf now in a very weakened state — conditions for turf diseases have become ideal. Many diseases are activated by the reduction of light and wet soil conditions. This year because of the smog cover these disease organisms could continue working in the daylight hours. Fungicides and management practices to prevent the spread of the disease were futile. Because of the lack of direct sunlight the ability of the grass plant to recover was also affected.

With the smog alert now over, *slowly* the affected areas are being revived. The year 1973 will long be remembered as the worst year on golf courses in over 20 years. Unless these larger cities push for cleaner air and better smog controls, 1973 will only be remembered as the year it all

started. Grass does need light — *direct* sunlight not filtered through and screened out by smog.

## THANKS FOR RESERVATION CARDS

by Bob Shields

My thanks are extended to all members who returned their reservation cards for the Woodmont Meeting.

Ninety-two cards were received with 76 people indicating they would attend. Then there were phone calls saying some would like to cancel out while others wanted their name added. The number I told the house to prepare for was 80 and that was the number we had!

The reason for the return card is of course to let the club house know how many dinners to prepare, but one of the side benefits I have always liked is the friendly hand written notes on some of the cards when they are received.

For example:

"I will hopefully attend the October 2 meeting at Woodmont. Always look forward to your invitation — will do my darndest to attend." Claude Barrick

"I will 'with pleasure' attend the Woodmont meeting." Brownie

"Looking forward to seeing my favorite golf course — South Woodmont." Bill Emerson

"Bob — sorry I can't make this one. It's always a pleasure at Woodmont. Hope you have another good meeting." Elwyn Deal

"I look forward to it." Fred Grau

"Hate to miss it but have a conflict." Jack Hall

"Will be out of town." Jack Hewitt

"Deep regrets, it would be great to see Woodmont again." Charles K. Hallowell (Mr. Hallowell was USGA Greens Section representative in 1957 when Woodmont decided to have Bermuda grass fairways on the South Course, and a visit from him would be welcome at any time.)

"Sorry Bob, I will be unable to attend." Percy W. LeDuc (He is Mr. Argyle C.C.)

"Sorry Bob, I can't be there. As you know I will be in London at that time. Have a good tournament." Bob Martino

"I am disappointed that I cannot make the meeting, but I am settling on a new house that day and will be tied up all day. Hope the weather is good and best regards to all." Carl Schoening

"Sorry I can't be there. Enjoyed the article in Weeds Trees and Turf. Keep up the good work. Have you tried K-31 fescue in a stress area — seeded heavily?" Fred Sappenfield

"Sorry, Bob wish I could make it." Dick Schmitt

I received a card from Wayne Jerome in Florida saying he would not attend but no reason as to why he could not. Now we must wonder — was it because he was too busy, too far away or was it because Gay and Dale wouldn't let him come.

We did have one member from Florida, tho, Russell Kerns was with us and we were happy to see him again.

It's too bad the rain spoiled the tournament. We wanted you to see the golf course and make suggestions on how we might improve it. Some of our members said it was in better condition than it has been all summer and accused me of dressing it up for the superintendents. I admitted that we had done some extra work, then added that we always do for big tournaments.

## NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION LAUNCHES "OPERATION GOLF UPDATE"

"Operation — GOLF UPDATE" will be the most comprehensive effort ever made to compile all available significant information about golf and golfers in the United States, according to Don A. Rossi, Executive Director of the National Golf Foundation, which will spearhead the survey of more than 11,000 golf courses.

Rossi explained that golf course records maintained by the Foundation, and dating back to its origin in 1936, are no longer valid since many golf courses have changed in the interim — in ownership, in size, in type of operation and in the facilities offered. He said many new trends in golf course planning, construction and operation have emerged in recent years which cannot be statistically measured by the Foundation's present records. He added:

"To function effectively in meeting the growing demand for help in the development of every type of golf facility we must bring our unique storehouse of golf information up to date."

Rossi said the "GOLF UPDATE" questionnaire has been especially designed for quick and easy fill-out, and features humorous cartoons to make it fun to complete. It is arranged for computer analysis, for quick 'readout' of information. He said:

"This is one survey that will reward the respondents directly because it will produce a useful yardstick for every private, daily fee and municipal golf operation. However, for this yardstick to be truly useful, we need much more than a 'token' response.

"We receive enquiries daily on how many golf courses have installed automatic, or semi-automatic irrigation, where they are located, are they successful, what are the problems, etc.

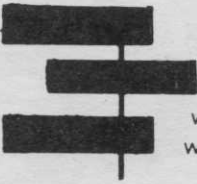
"Other questions involve the use and operation of golf car fleets at the different types of golf courses, mechanized golf course maintenance — even golf course lighting for night play or night maintenance.

"One very important area of information requested is whether the golf operation employs a golf professional, a

course superintendent or a manager — any one of these, or all, or a combination of any two of these. The answers to these questions could indicate a need for additional trained specialists for these departments."

Rossi added that the final 'readout' of the survey will not only furnish much additional important information for the Foundation in helping existing golf operations with problems as well as assisting in the development of new golf courses; it will also indicate future directions for Foundation literature and consultant services.

The National Golf Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the development of more golfing opportunity for Americans through its facility and activity development programs, is headquartered in Chicago's Merchandise Mart.



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