CHARTER

Mid-Atlantic Newsletter

PUBLISHED BY:
Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the Advancement of the Golf Course Superintendent through Education and Merit

Volume XXX | April 1977 | Number 4

April Meeting

The April meeting of Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents will be held April 12, 1977 at the Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club in Ocean City, Maryland. Our host Superintendent will be George Murphy.

George Murphy has been at the Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club for the past three seasons. Prior to coming to the Ocean City club George was superintendent of the Tavistock Country Club in Hadenfield, New Jersey for 22 years.

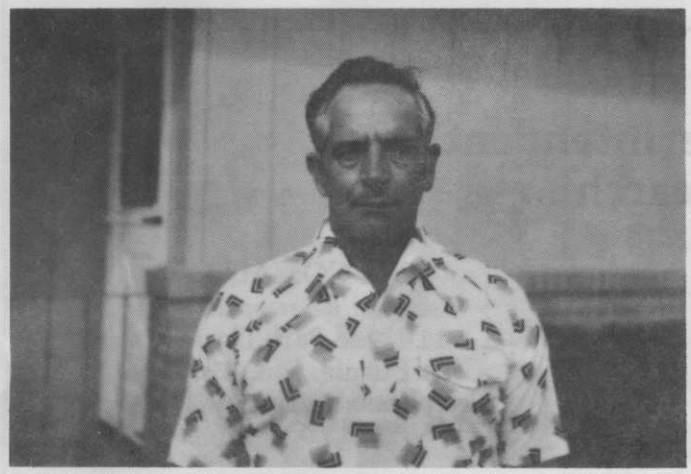
George and his wife Gerry have two married sons.

The Ocean City Golf and Yacht Club opened May 30, 1959 with 18 holes and a new nine was incorporated into the old 18, seven years ago. It is operated on a semi-private basis with a membership of 732 families and a non-resident type of membership of 100 to 125 members.

The club was started by a group of Berlin and Ocean City men who formed three corporations and is still operated by officials of the corporations.

Directions to the Club: Rt. 50 East to Rt. 611. Turn right on Rt. 611 to the club on the right.

GOLF - Anytime
COCKTAILS & DINNER - 5:30 p.m., $12.00
SPEAKER - Dr. Charles Elsrodt



GEORGE MURPHY

Postcards must be returned. If you don't send a card, and you show up, you *will* be at the end of the chow line.

(See page 8 for Map to Club)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Golf Business, formerly *Golfdom* magazine, published in its "Feedback" section in the January issue, a letter from a California-based superintendent who had given up on G.C.S.A.A. He resigned his membership and told *Golf Business* why. Far be it for me to criticize a man for stating his views, but with all respect to the gentleman from California, I have yet to see anything accomplished by this type of tactic.

I am sure that every association member would like to see a particular change in the G.C.S.A.A. and in his own local chapter. Change should lead to progress. However, if each of us used resignation as a tool to institute change, no one would be left to benefit from its effect.

It is my opinion that G.C.S.A.A. has concluded that it does have organizational differences of opinion within its membership. G.C.S.A.A. has taken a step to recognize these differences by forming the Organizational Study Committee. This committee is chaired by Charles Baskin of Connecticut, and is formed for the purpose of blazing a path that G.C.S.A.A. will follow in the future.

It is my suggestion to M.A.A.G.C.S. members to support this committee by providing the "Feedback" this committee will need to blaze the proper path for G.C.S.A.A.'s future.

Quitters never win, and winners never quit!

Yours for finer turf, for better Golf,

Bill Emerson

Greens Fertilization in the Mid-Atlantic Area

by ALEX WATSON

For many years now, we have heard on every side the numerous suggestions and recommendations as to the amounts of nitrogen required for the quality growth of our Bentgrass greens. Suggested levels have ranged from 8 to 12 pounds of N per 1000 square feet per season. In this regard we have found that Bentgrasses do not require these levels to produce a good dense, vigorous, deep rooted greens turf. During periods of extremely high temperatures and humidity that we experience in our normal summer seasons Bentgrasses cannot endure when excess nitrogen is applied.

During the past 18 years we have experimented with many materials and varied programs with a great deal of winter fertilization rather than applying units during the summer season. Years ago we mixed sulphate of ammonia with topdressing and with 5 men equipped with buckets of this material, hand spread the mixture in two directions immediately followed by copious amounts of water. At different intervals over succeeding years we used commercial fertilizer mixtures like: 12-4-8, 10-6-4, 12-0-12 ad infinitum. Later we used proportioners applying a mixture of powdered urea-form, sulphate or potash, and hydrated lime. This

(continued on page 4)

Topdressing Kentucky Bluegrass and Creeping Bentgrass with Sand

DR. DOUG HAWES
Institute of Applied Agriculture
University of Maryland

Topdressing with sand versus none and summer versus winter fertilization are four management tools I am presently studying in an attempt to learn how to grow combination cool and warm season turf grass combinations in the transition zone. I am attempting to grow these combinations for use on tees, athletic facilities, fairways and home lawns. In this study, topdressing with sand has greatly benefited Penncross creeping bentgrass. At the same time Kentucky bluegrass, a blend of five varieties, has done better where it was not topdressed.

Topdressing was first applied in early summer of 1974. In 1975 and 1976 applications were made in late spring, mid-summer and early fall. The sand used has 89% of its size distribution between 0.1 and 1.0 mm. Each application consists of just under ⅛ inch. It is brushed and watered into the turf. The turf is maintained at ¾ of an inch from late spring till early fall. Height of cut is maintained at one inch after the fall topdressing till late spring.

The first noticeable benefit of topdressing was in the fall of 1975. During August, 1975, the bentgrass had been almost eliminated by chinch bugs, brown patch and drought. When the warm season grasses turned brown after the first hard frost it became very clear that the bentgrass was in much better shape where it had received topdressing. Similar data, but without clear differences, was obtained this fall.

On the topdressed half of these plots less winter annual weeds, lower severity of spring dead spot on bermuda, and a lower percentage of dead areas due to insect, drought and disease damage has been observed. Thus the quality of turf was found to be significantly better on topdressed plots in July and November of 1975 and in February, April, June and July of 1976. Thatch accumulation appears to be less in the topdressed plots. However, thatch has not yet become a problem, and thatch measurements have not been made yet.

Some layering of sand and organic matter has been observed. The layering does not appear to be creating a problem. Lighter, more frequent applications would eliminate this layering. Lighter applications would also be easier to work into the turf than the present ⅛ inch application.

There is very little literature on the topdressing of turfgrasses. Engel (1967) reported on a ten-year study where topdressing was used in three out of ten treatments for thatch control.

He used a sandy loam topdressing containing 8 to 12 percent organic matter. Topdressing containing treatments in this study were associated with reduced thatch, improved quality, reduced amounts of *Poa annua*, improved infiltration and freedom from dry spots.

Rice (1964) included topdressing in a relatively short term study he did on Penncross creeping bentgrass. He compared a sand, a loam and a loam-sand mixture with no topdressing. Skogley (1976) reporting on this thesis noted that the loam and the loam-sand mixture produced the highest quality scores. Sand resulted in inferior quality scores in the spring but was better than no topdressing. In July of each year only the no topdressing treatment was rated inferior. Roots were

(continued on page 6)

Greens Fertilization

(continued from page 2)

program gave us good results; however, during the summer seasons we still experienced some turf problems even with reduced rates of application.

With the advent of controlled released granular fertilizers we have established what we feel is an excellent program. Since 1967 we have applied approximately 7.5 to 8 pounds of nitrogen per 1000 square feet per season and the overall results have been gratifying. We use O.M. Scotts fertilizers and start our program in January with the application of ½ lb. N/1000 square feet. Another 1 lb. is applied in February, March and May. From May until September we do not apply any fertilizer. In September we apply 1½ lb. of N/1000 square feet. If additional phosphorus is indicated by our soil tests we apply superphosphate to attain the proper level. PH in our greens has averaged about 7.1 since 1968. During the stress months we apply iron with either spray or granular application.

Once again the old adage comes to the fore, "To Each His Own". Follow your own planned procedures on a test basis for nitrogen levels. Keep records of soil tests and PH levels preferably on a grass nursery. Your greens turf may not look like the "Emerald Isle" during the stress months but it will come through these periods in better condition.

In the transition zone we have many obstacles to overcome during the summer months and each season brings some old problems and some new. This is one that has plagued many of us for years and now there is "Light At The End Of The Rainbow". The varied research programs that have been conducted at various universities along with newer materials have given us a yardstick to use in establishing sound management programs and enabled us to standardize fertilization schedules. We can now limit the many problems that cropped up each season with fertilizer misuse. We hope that you may be able to utilize some of the information in this paper to your advantage.

Dates to Remember

MAY 10
Hog Neck Golf Course
Superintendent - Pro Tournament

JUNE 14
Sparrows Point Country Club

JULY 12
Hunt Valley Golf Club

AUGUST
Ladies' Night

SEPTEMBER 20
Suburban Country Club

OCTOBER 11
Woodmont Country Club
Superintendent's Tournament

NOVEMBER 11
Maryland Country Club

DECEMBER 13
U.S. Naval Academy Golf Course
Election Meeting

From men, man learns to speak,
from the gods to keep silent.

Plutarch

Topdressing
(continued from page 3)

more plentiful under topdressed turf, and in a fall sampling only sand topdressing had significantly more roots below two inches. Sand was found to be most effective in reducing the organic matter accumulation in the surface inch of soil.

Skogley (1975), also reported effects of topdressing on management of velvet bentgrass. Using a soil-sand mix he reports topdressing seven times per year resulted in reduced organic matter and improved turf quality score averages two out of four years when compared to two topdressings per year but not when compared to four topdressings.

Madison (1974), in several similar articles suggested topdressing with sand containing fertilizers and pesticides as "an alternative method of greens management". Thompson and Ward (1965 and 1966) report topdressing to be the management method which best reduces thatch under bermuda grass. Both Cole (1975), Madison and myself suggest that topdressing will reduce disease problems. Engel, however, found more dollarspot associated with topdressed bentgrass plots than untopdressed plots.

Most, but not all, writers on the subject favor topdressing. With those writers that do favor regular topdressing there is disagreement as to what should be used for topdressing material. Madison recommends sand and the USGA Greens Section appears to be leaning in this direction. Most of the old superintendents and most of the researchers above use or used a sandy loam, often with medium to high organic content. In the past, recommended practices were to use a material of the same composition as your soil. But if you want to improve the soil, most of you would want a sandier mix which would hold promise of better drainage. So why not topdress with sand? I personally see no good reason for including organic matter in a topdress mix when reducing thatch accumulation (organic matter) is a principle goal. I would feel more comfortable in recommending straight sand topdressing if there were some research results showing that it was indeed better than a loamy sand.

A straight sand topdressing does offer advantages over a topdressing mix. It should be a lot cheaper, and secondly, one should be better able to spread it cheaply and easily with large cyclone spreaders. If you do go the straight sand route, I suggest you follow Madison's advice. Use sand less than 1 mm in size. This gives you a material which will work easily into the surface mat and thus not interfere with mowers or golfers.

I agree with Madison in that the first couple of sand applications should go on after a heavy, deep aerification in which the cores are removed before topdressing. The sand should then be worked down into the holes so that there will be a transition zone of sand and old soil rather than a direct layer of sand on soil. If the soil below is extremely impervious you can still create a soggy sand layer on top of the soil. But a more serious problem is to create a "Dagwood sandwich" of alternate layers of sand, thatch, calcined clay and other topdressing materials. Layers impede water, air and roots. Regardless of what you decide to do about topdressing, avoid layers of fine materials on coarse materials. Layers may cost you your turf and also your job.

Also I suggest that you topdress more frequently when creeping bentgrass stolons are growing the most. The peak growth period for stolon growth is the last half of June. Therefore, topdressing should be most frequent in the May through July period.

It should be noted that Madison is recommending 14

(continued on page 7)

Mid-Atlantic
Superintendent Pro Tournament

Tuesday, May 10, 1977

Hogs Neck Golf Course
Easton, Maryland

INCLUDES:
PRO PURSE: $350.00 for 8 places
SUPERINTENDENTS: Prizes of merchandise
GREENS FEES
CARTS
LUNCH: Cold Cut Sandwich Bar and Beer
DINNER: Tidewater Inn
Roast Top Sirloin
Hors d'oeuvres and Raw Bar

PRICES:
TEAM: $44.00
SINGLE: $22.00
DINNER ONLY: $12.00

CARDS WILL BE SENT OUT. PLEASE RETURN THEM OR CALL:
Ben Stagg
Shop (301) 822-7467; Home (301) 822-4479

Topdressing

(continued from page 6)

applications/year. For our shorter growing season 10 applications on three week intervals is probably comparable to his 14. Note that he is recommending only 3 cubic feet per 100 sq. ft. per application.

Holman Griffin recently wrote, "A good topdressing material (properly analyzed) can eventually modify or replace the poor soil to a depth which is adequate to give your green a new lease on life and provide a manageable situation." Properly done, topdressing can be beneficial to creeping bentgrass. Improperly done, it may cause you many more problems than it is worth.

I suggest you read the articles I mentioned by Engel, Madison, Skogley, Thompson and Ward before beginning on a topdressing program or before changing to a straight sand topdressing.

Yesterday's formula for success is tomorrow's recipe for failure.

Arnold Glasgow

Teamwork

Many golf facilites can be improved, be they public or private, by the Superintendent and Pro making a joint effort to pull together.

In making the change from Dairy Farmer to Golf Course Superintendent, I brought the theory with me that golfers and cows were pretty much alike. Give them both enough good grass and you won't have too many problems. I found this theory to be only half true. Putting a fence up pretty much kept my cows where I wanted them, not so for golfers. I found I need all sorts of goodies like hazards, markers, tee markers, O B signs, 150 yd. markers, ground under repair, direction signs and the like. I turned to my Pro for the what and where of these things and other rules of play and found him most willing to help. This turned into frequent morning sessions over cups of coffee. We worked out a lot of problems and we really get along great.

When I moved to Hog Neck, I started these morning sessions and soon found our Pro willing to put on jeans, and help lay sod around the new club house. He also helped by keeping the sod watered, and helping to get the parking lot ready for opening day.

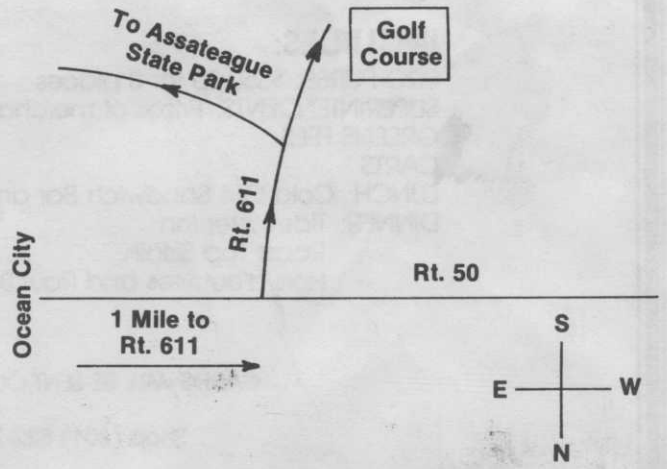
This Teamwork has been a big plus for both of us. We each run our own departments without conflict or interference. We have gained the respect of our park board and are able to run the day-to-day operations without interference from them.

Teamwork has truly helped make this the "Land of Pleasant Living."

Ben Stagg

Directions to Club:

Rt. 50 East to Rt. 611. Turn right on Rt. 611 to the club on the right.



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Mid-Atlantic
Newsletter

WAYNE EVANS
1804 Ironton Drive
Oxon Hill, Maryland 20021
301-567-9386

Published monthly by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the advancement of the golf course superintendent through education and merit.

Subscription rate for non-members: $5.00 per year.