



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 XXXI

August 1978

Number 8

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Fellow Members:

Summer's half over and everyone I've talked to is saying I've talked to is saying they're having a good summer. Help is plentiful and cooperative, the weather is holding on and members are happy with course conditions. Gentlemen this cannot be the Mid-Atlantic "Beware" of August.

Our August meeting is being held on Tuesday the 8th at Bob Milligan's Gunpowder Country Club in Laurel, Md. Bob again is hosting our Annual Family Picnic, so come one, come all and we'll have a ball.

Looking ahead, September's meeting is our joint meeting with Philly in Wilmington and our October meeting is at Hunt Valley Golf Club in Hunt Valley, Maryland. So mark your calendars early, we'd like to see you again before the snow flies.

Yours for better turf for better golf—with—can you believe green grass in August.

Bill Emerson

## Outlook Golf: 1978

By Don A. Rossi  
NGF Executive Director

Those who measure trends on sales charts may find it difficult to believe, but golf in the United States is beginning to show a slight but distinct resurgence from doldrums of the early and middle 1970's.

That is the word from the National Golf Foundation, collector and purveyor of facts and figures in golf. A reversal of a downward trend in golf facility development was evident in 1977 and is expected to continue in 1978.

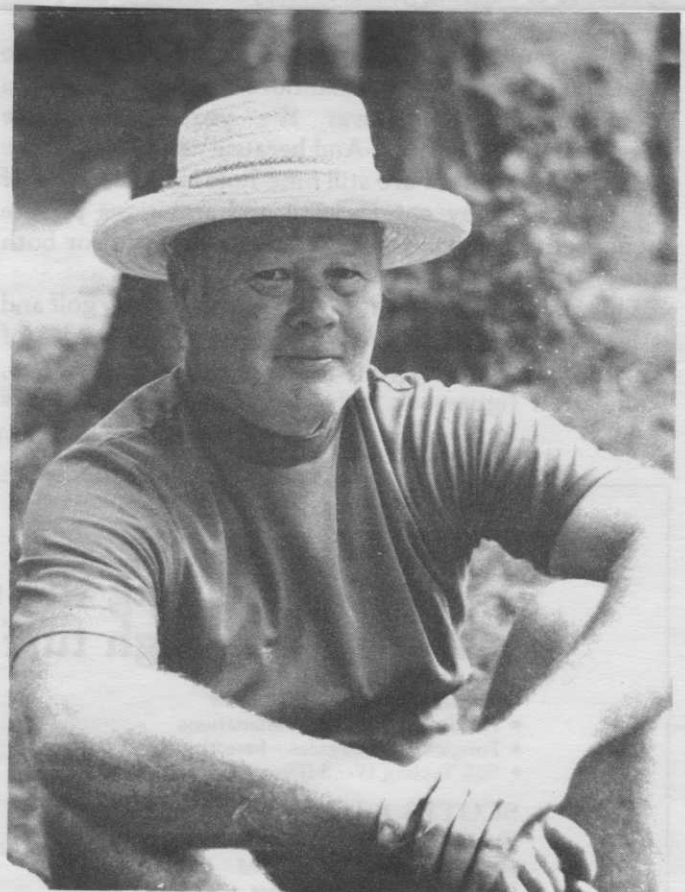
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## August Meeting

The August meeting will be held at the Gunpowder Country Club in Laurel, Maryland. Our host will be Bob Milligan. Bob, as you know, is the owner-operator at Gunpowder. This will be the fourth year in a row that we have had the picnic there, and anyone who has attended the picnic in the past knows the fun we have.

*Program for the Day:* Golf & Swimming - Anytime  
Picnic - 2:00

*Directions to the Club:* I-95 to the Beltsville exit towards Beltsville. Go ¼ mile to Gunpowder Road. Turn left to Club - 3 miles on the left.



BOB MILLIGAN

## Outlook Golf: 1978

(continued from page 1)

Equally important to the Foundation, whose entire efforts are dedicated to the advancement of golf, more golf is being played on existing facilities in virtually every area of the country.

When the Foundation's Research and Statistics Department counted only 190 openings of new golf facilities and additions to established courses during 1976, a new low for the past two decades was reached. The count of the three previous years in reverse order had been 318,277 and 322, all well down from the heyday of the late 60's when an average of 400 golf courses per year were being added to the American scene, thanks in large part to developers of vast real estate projects.

The outlook at the start of 1977 in the area of new construction was bleak at best. Predictions called for another new low, reflecting the spiraling land costs and prohibitive development expense. Only municipalities and a few major developers were making fresh ventures into golf and they with some trepidations.

As the year wore on, however, there was increasing evidence that golf was coming back in terms of additional facilities. And in the vanguard was a segment of the golf world which had survived the tightened belts of the early 70's, the energy crisis and inflation and was ready to pronounce itself bullish again on golf. Owners and operators of existing golf courses, particularly nine-hole golf courses, took the lead with expansion projects.

As a result, Foundation researchers counted more than 200 new courses and additions combined in 1977, a seven percent gain over the year golf course development hit bottom. And because nearly half of the nation's golf courses are still nine-hole layouts, many of them operated by enterprising and ambitious private owners, the outlook for 1978 is equally good for both add-on and new construction.

That means more places for Americans to play golf and it is probably just as well. While equipment sales of recent years may suggest that golfers are playing less, Foundation figures do not necessarily agree. Golfers

(continued on page 8)

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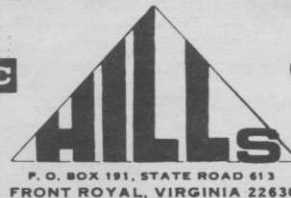
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# Establishing new turf: Seeding or Sodding can do the job

by William Hoopes,  
Pro Turf Division,  
O.M. Scott & Sons

Even though there is no "perfect" bluegrass, there are quality varieties available for aesthetic, athletic or industrial turf use. Turf established from quality grasses will provide fewer problems at less expense in labor and materials. Turf generated from poor quality seed or varieties can never produce quality turf.

The quality result we all demand begins with the discovery of an individual grass variety more than a decade before the professional turf market ever realizes it.

Once selected the new grass is watched closely under natural growing conditions or in the greenhouse. Before a grass is tested outdoors, there must be enough seed to establish plots. Therefore, after a greenhouse evaluation, the most promising plants are moved outdoors into clone fields where they produce seed. Hopefully, each clone will only require two years to produce enough seed to plant 20 square feet of a test area. Those grasses which advance are established in three plots measuring 2 x 5 feet. One half is mowed at two inch height while the other half subjected to a mowing height of 3/4 inch. These preliminary test plots are fertilized four times annually and do not receive the benefit of any pesticides or irrigation. Each plot is evaluated periodically for its color, texture, density, growth habit, disease resistance and drought tolerance.

A tremendous amount of research, time and testing goes into the development of a new grass variety. Still there is no "super grass" on the market today. Disease, insect and other pest problems exist now and will exist in the future. For this reason it is essential that the turf manager do the best job of initial turf establishment in an attempt to bring to maturity, hopefully within the first growing season, a dense, thick, green carpet of turf. I cannot overstate that the healthier each grass plant is, the more it will be able to resist the encroachment of bothersome turf pests.

When considering the establishment of turf seeding, our first concern should be to apply quality seed. This seed should come from a reliable vendor, and it should have been tested thoroughly for weeds, crop content and the amount of inert matter. Because of the age and intent of early seed labeling laws, modern day seed labels do not provide the seed purchaser with adequate information regarding the cleanliness of the seed for turfgrass use.

In the early 1900's seed labeling laws were established for farmers who did not blend seeds together and who had different weed problems than those today. Seed labeling laws address themselves to agricultural type rather than turf problems. For this reason, the seed buyer must rely of the credibility and reliability of the seed vendor. Simply put, there are no bargains in grass seed. You do get what you pay for. Because of the enormous cost involved in seed production, clean, high quality, vigorous grass seed cannot be obtained at bargain prices.

Having obtained quality seed and determined the seeding rate which will provide enough seed for a good stand of turf, the turf manager should follow prescribed and proven seeding procedures. First, prepare an adequate rough grade, paying special attention to the slope of the ground. This is critical guaranteeing adequate drainage after the turf has matured. For this task, a bulldozer is normally used. Second, establish a coarse-textured finish grade. Many times, a roto tiller can be used in small areas while larger, tractor drawn equipment is easier and quicker in open areas.

Now is the time to remove rocks! Don't leave debris behind which could endanger someone who must later mow the young turf. Third, apply seed through a drop-type spreader if possible. Rotary spreaders may be used on large turf areas but should only be used as a last resort and on a calm day. Be sure when using the drop-type spreader to overlap at least the width of a wheel. Avoid the embarrassment of mis-strips 2-3 inches wide which can take as much as a year or more to fill in. Fourth, after applying the seed in one direction with the drop spreader, make an application of a high phosphorus starter-type fertilizer in the opposite direction. This will insure that you don't confuse spreader tracks. This

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# WAYNE'S PLACE

This summer has been, so far, a pretty good summer for us all. I've had a chance to talk to many "supers" in the last two weeks and the general comment is that the area courses all look good and most guys are having one of their best years. I've also been out and playing golf a little more this year, and I had a chance to play over at Indian Springs in the Annual Heroes Incorporated Tournament. If all the courses look like Herb Hienliens, we're in tremendous shape. Both the Big Chief and the Valley courses were beautiful. My only wish now is that we could just skip over our usual August weather, Amen?



August 3rd, 4th and 5th this year are the dates for the annual Metropolitan Horticulture Show and Plant Clinic. This show is sponsored by the Maryland, Virginia and D.C. Extension Services. In the past the Washington Area Superintendents have helped by manning the Turf Question and Answer booth, and we have been asked to help again. If any of you out there can help this year please contact Lester Tanner for dates and times. It will be held at Montgomery Mall this year.

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## Seeding or Sodding

(continued from page 3)

starter-type fertilizer should be a complete fertilizer of a slow release type.

There is no need to till starter fertilizer in. Tests have shown that surface applications do an adequate job of turf establishment because of the ability of the plant to take up and translocate nutrients to the deepest growing portion of the roots. It would be a mistake to apply nitrogen only or a high nitrogen fertilizer to germinating plants. The primary nutrient required by seedling turf is phosphorus. Even if phosphorus levels seem adequate, I would still recommend a high phosphorus slow release type fertilizer as the phosphorus in the soil may be unavailable for a variety of reasons.

A soil test would be a wise investment prior to seeding. Many good labs can provide helpful information in this respect. At times, I recommend as a fifth step, light dragging of the seed. The purpose is to jiggle the seed down around the coarse-textured soil particles to a depth of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch. A flexible doormat or piece of chain-link fencing will do an adequate job when used for dragging purposes. The seeds lodge around the coarse particles and do receive some protection from excessive exposure to sun and wind. Water is also preserved in these crevices for a longer period of time and is more available to the germinating seeds. Sixth, mulch is considered an option. In the northern 2/3 of the United States between May 15 and September 1, I would recommend a light straw mulching except in areas on the East Coast where salt hay is available.

Of course, the objective of applying a mulch is to both protect the seed from drying winds and preserve available water as long as possible.

For this reason, three or four pieces of straw coming together at any one point is very adequate. Many people make the mistake of applying too much straw and actually burying the seed. Peat moss makes a poor mulch since it absorbs and holds the water making it unavailable to the seed. Mulch, of course, is highly recommended on sloped areas where wash is expected.

My further recommendation on sloped areas would be simply to install sod. Seventh, be sure to keep the top  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of soil damp. It is not mandatory to soak the seedbed. As long as frequent waterings are applied for as short a period of time as 10 minutes the seed coat will be kept damp. This is the most important factor. Germinating seedlings cannot dry out totally and live. It is also good to remind ourselves that watering must be continued for at least one month.

This is especially true where blends are used and for example, in the case of a ryegrass/fine fescue/bluegrass blend, the ryegrass will be visible within one week. The fescue within 12 days and the bluegrass perhaps not for at least two weeks. In this event, many people make the mistake of watering for the first two weeks until they see what appears an adequate stand of grass, which is, of course, made up only of ryegrass and fine fescue. They then cease watering and the bluegrass may not survive. Eighth, follow-up with a repeat of high nitrogen fertilizer in 4-6 weeks.

This is important because the turfgrass plant is now shifting its nutrient requirements from predominantly phosphorus to predominantly nitrogen where it will

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# Mid-Atlantic GCSA Family Picnic

Tuesday, August 8, 1978

Gunpowder Country Club

Laurel, Maryland

2:00 p.m. - until

Hot Dogs

Chicken

Corn on the cob

Steamed Crabs

Games for the "kids"

## Dates to Remember

### AUGUST 8th

Family Picnic - Gunpowder Country Club

### AUGUST 16th and 17th

Penn State Turfgrass Field Days

### SEPTEMBER

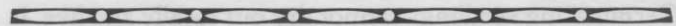
Philadelphia Tournament

Wilmington Country Club, Wilmington, Del.

### OCTOBER

Superintendent's Tournament

Hunt Valley Golf Course



A man walked up to the reception desk in a doctor's office. The receptionist asked him what he had. He said, "Shingles." She took down his name, address, medical insurance number and told him to have a seat.

Fifteen minutes later a nurse's aide came out and asked him what he had. "Shingles," he replied. She took down his height, weight, a complete medical history and told him to wait in the examining room.

A half-hour later a nurse came in and asked what he had. "Shingles," he replied again. She took blood samples, a pressure test, a specimen, and told him to take off his clothes and wait for the doctor.

An hour later the doctor came in and asked him what he had. He said, "Shingles." The doctor said, "Where?" He said, "Outside in the truck. Where do you want them?"



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## Seeding or Sodding

(continued from page 5)

remain throughout the life of the grass plant. We believe that the fertilizer should be of a slow releasing type in order to insure minimum burn potential to the young seedling turf and the long lasting characteristics which produce economies.

Where time does not permit, sodding may prove to be the best method of turf establishment. Again, as in the case of seeding, we must buy quality sod. First, be sure to buy your sod from a reputable grower. This is something that can easily be checked. Ask people who have purchased from the grower before, go look at the turf areas, evaluate the work he did, and evaluate the quality of the turf areas several months after it was installed.

Is it weed and disease free? Did the sod contain other bothersome turf pests? These are questions which must be answered. In terms of the procedures to follow in laying sod, make sure that the grade or slope is as adequate in every way as if you were establishing turf by seed. Remember, once the sod is down, there is no way to go back and change the grade or slope. You must live with the drainage you have created. As you lay the sod, make sure that the ends of the strips are staggered and do not line up evenly across the turf area.

This is a practice followed by most good sod layers to insure that if any problems develop at the end of a strip it is not obvious for more than 12 inches. Be sure that the seams are pulled tightly together as the sod is placed on the soil. As you move across the turf area, be sure to stand back occasionally and look for low spots as this again is your only chance to establish a level surface more pleasing to the eye and easier to mow at a later date.

Having laid the sod, start watering immediately. In fact, I would recommend that you start the sprinkler as soon as there is enough sod on the ground to handle the sprinkler's pattern. As in the case of turf establishment by seed, we recommend the use of a high phosphorus starter-type fertilizer which may be applied either before or after the sod is laid. Although the grass plant's roots are somewhat mature, a high phosphorus fertilizer still helps promote the strongest, quickest knitting of the sod to the soil. Again, follow-up maintenance should be basically the same whether seeding or sodding. The primary difference in procedures would be that in the case of turf establishment by sodding, fewer and heavier waterings are recommended. In the case of sod, we should soak the new turf well rather than just dampening the upper surface.

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## Outlook Golf: 1978

(continued from page 2)

may simple be buying less, reflecting the necessity to spend more for gasoline to get to the golf course, steadily rising green fees and refreshments at the course.

**That golfers are playing more** is attested in figures gleaned in a late 1977 Foundation survey to measure rounds of play at all types of courses across the nation. Replies from over 500 of 1,100 courses surveyed indicated a median increase in play over 1976 of 5%. Of these courses, 66.2% reported increases and just 18.6% indicated play was down. The remaining 15.2% reported no change in play during 1977.

When the survey replies are segregated into the nine geographic divisions used in all NGF research projects, each division also shows an increase in play. The regional increases ranged from a high of 6.5% in the Mountain Division, where 92% of the courses reported increases, to a low of 2% in the New England Division, where only 50% reported more play. The East South Central Division showed the next highest number of courses reporting an increase with 75%.

The New England Division had the highest percentage of courses reporting decreases with 30%. This is directly attributable to the severe weather conditions affecting much of the area during 1977.

Will golf play continue to increase in 1978 despite intensifying competition for Americans' leisure time and recreation dollar from everything from tennis to taffy-

pulling? Probably. The Foundation has discovered that golf courses build golfers as certainly as golfers build golf courses.

**Over the years each new surge** of golf course construction has brought with it new waves of golfers to play them. They will probably come again, but the Foundation is taking no chances. It has launched as its major 1978 project a campaign to deliver 500,000 new golfers to the game. They will join the more than 16 million Americans already playing golf to fill open tees and, hopefully, produce a new surge in sporting goods sales.

The Foundation is going after beginners in the schools and colleges, businesses and industries, civic and service clubs, churches, playgrounds, senior citizen centers and even in the average households.

Recent history has demonstrated that women golfers are increasing at a faster rate than men and NGF intends to encourage that trend. Scores of clinics are already scheduled for 1978, enabling Foundation education personnel to teach the teachers who will introduce young players to golf. Golf course operators, golf professionals and others are being mobilized behind recruiting expeditions for older beginning golfers.

Results could be dramatic, but even if they are not, the game's doom-sayers have already been driven to cover by 1977 facility development and participation figures. The outlook for 1978 is for continued small gains in both these areas which, in the long run, are the most accurate measurements of golf's health and welfare.

## Mid-Atlantic Newsletter

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



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.