

The Low-Down on Bent Grass

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THERE are wonderful lawns at some of the colleges at Oxford, in England, and most people have heard how one of the gardeners accounted for their splendid condition.

"We've mowed 'em and rolled 'em for five hundred years."

Now the grass at the Oxford colleges is undoubtedly becoming well acclimated, and we cannot say with any degree of certainty that ours will be equally good in five hundred years; but we can say, and I for one do, that there are lawns and greens in this country which, at the tender age of six months, are at least as good as any of the vintage of 1428.

There is another Old Country fable, however, which contains a moral. Says Judge Hardhead, to gardener Giles, who is weeding the lawn:

"I suppose, Giles, that that moss would eventually kill the grass?"

"It would, my lord."

A few days later the judge sees gardener Giles again attending to the lawn.

"I suppose, Giles," says he, "the grass will eventually kill out that moss?"

"Not a doubt of it, my lord."

Now we talk about things familiarly and think we know them, but when some judge comes along and says "I suppose weed control is more a matter of the soil having much active aluminum than a question of high acidity, is it not?" or "Which do you consider the best strain of bent grass, Giles?" we are apt to be a little ambiguous, ourselves.

I have been a greenkeeper and I have done a little construction work and I have had a business in seed and stolons and I have written a thesis about the bent grasses; yet I do not seem to be catching up at all as regards the questions which I can answer.

If you had asked me, six years ago, which strain of creeping bent I liked the best I would have said "The Metropolitan, of those I've seen, much the best."

Now I would say "What do you mean by creeping

Was A Greenkeeper



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Was graduated from the School of Agriculture at Oxford, England. Took his Masters Degree under Doctor Kennedy, the eminent agrostologist at the University of California. Spent four years as greenkeeper and in business in Southern California and is now agrostologist to the Agricultural Experiment Station of the Rhode Island State College at Kingston, R. I.

bent? Do you mean that which comes in German bent seed and is not like Rhode Island bent, or velvet bent, but is like the strains which have been propagated at Washington? You mean that? Well, that is creeping bent all right, but so is every other bent used on golf courses; they all creep."

You say you don't call every kind of bent that creeps "creeping bent." Oh, I see. Well, would you call this coarse, straggly one, with stolons two feet long, creeping bent? Oh, that's *maritima*, is it? Then *maritima* isn't a creeping bent? You say the term "creeping bent" should not be used except for the species which Linnaeus named *Agrostis stolonifera*. Well, which species *did* he give the name to? There are several specimens so-named in the herbarium at Upsala; one of them undoubtedly belongs to a different species from the others and is not stoloniferous.

Dr. Karl Lindman describes the true *Agrostis stolonifera* of Linnaeus as having a long ligule, an open panicle and an erect culm, decumbent at the base, or producing stolons. But if we call all the bents which answer that description *Agrostis stolonifera* we shan't be any better off than if we call them all creeping bent!

I would suggest finding a new name for the group which includes the Metropolitan, Washington and Virginia strains. If you mean which of that group, when you ask which strain of creeping bent I like best, I say the Metropolitan, but if you mean which of all the bents that creep (as I think you ought to mean if you use that term) I must say that I am not sure. Some of the new strains of velvet bent seem almost too good to be true, and some of the *maritima* seed from Oregon makes splendid turf, in the West, too.

And it is getting like that with most things; I simply don't know what is what. However, some people have found out some things and others have found out others. There's no doubt we are getting along pretty fairly, between us. The Experiment Station here at Kingston, Rhode Island, has been in the forefront for a number of years in experiments with golf grasses. I believe that it was here where the

theory of promoting acid soil conditions by fertilizer treatment, in order to encourage bent grass and reduce weed growth, originated.

Just now I am trying to find out, among other things, to what extent the characteristics of the pure-bred strains can be transmitted through the seed; in other words whether seed grown from, say, Metropolitan stolons will produce turf like Metropolitan turf. Mr. A. N. Peckham, who harvests large quantities of bent seed in the New England states, has already found that it will do so, for a year or two, but that sooner or later it becomes pollinated by seed of the native bents and then the characteristics are lost.

It may be possible, however, to breed true for a number of generations, in which case a distinct variety could be produced that would be much less susceptible to cross-pollination. Rhode Island bent, redtop and velvet bent are well defined species and pollination of one by the other is apparently ineffectual.

SEED FROM BENT GRASSES

WE ARE also trying to find out exactly how much seed the different kinds of bent produce. We have laid out forty-eight plats and are growing redtop, Rhode Island bent, the Metropolitan, Washington and Virginia strains of "creeping bent," four velvet bents and three strains of seaside bent from Oregon—four plats of each kind. We will see to what extent the seed cross-pollinates, the weight of seed produced and how little fertilizer need be used in order to get a remunerative crop.

It will be at least another year yet before any recommendations can be made to those interested in seed production, but we hope that this may become a valuable subsidiary industry in Rhode Island and elsewhere in New England.

At the present time South German mixed bent is being retailed at 70c a pound and it is certainly not possible for our farmers to grow seed to sell at 70c retail. In Germany a large family of children will cut the seed and sell it at a few cents a pound, whereas the American farmer has his children at school, or engaged in other cultural pursuits; pays \$3.00 to \$5.00

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keepers of Indiana into a local organization, which had culminated successfully at that particular time. He also spoke of the fact that he had done all of this for the boys as an individual and only wished he was a greenkeeper.

After Mr. Griener's talk the president adjourned the meeting, which is to meet one month later at which time the committees will report. Thus we add another link to the National Association of Greenkeepers of America. Many friends attended the meeting.

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a day for labor and buys all his implements in a protected market. At present he has to ask a higher price than that for which German bent sells and rely on the superiority of his product.

The German seed is all right for ordinary lawn purposes but every greenkeeper knows what a patchy putting-green it produces. Some golfers say they like it on that account since the vari-colored patches serve as landmarks on the way to the hole, but I do not believe the best opinion would support that view. I certainly regard absolutely uniformity of texture and color as the hall-mark of excellence in putting greens.

The raising of bent grass seed is now a considerable industry in this country and it seems time that the farmers on the East and West coasts should cooperate to the extent of asking for a protective tariff against inferior foreign seed.

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Greenkeepers Hold Clam Bake

The Cleveland District Association of Greenkeepers of which Fred A. Burkhardt of the Westwood Country Club is president, held a clam bake, October 15 at the Brae Burn Golf Club near Akron, Ohio. The host, L. M. Latta, owner and manager of the Brae Burn Links had everything in preparation and according to all reports the boys all had a great time.

The large attendance is evidence of the good fellowship which pervades this organization. They came from far and wide to partake of the appetizing viands which Frank Ermer the secretary had provided. Needless to say there was no business transacted as the event was entirely one of pleasure without restraint. The following greenkeepers were present:

Frank Ermer, Ridgewood Golf Club, Cleveland, Ohio; Chris Bain, Oakwood Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio; Bert Sheldin, The Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio; C. Zink, Highland Golf Club, Cleveland, Ohio; M. M. Parsons, Wooster Country Club, Wooster, Ohio; Walter Knowles, Cleveland, Ohio; A. J. Fovargue, Westbrook Country Club, Mansfield, Ohio; H. Simmonds, Highland Golf Club, Cleveland, Ohio; George Bauer, Ridgewood Golf Club, Cleveland, Ohio; Chas. Spencer, Fairlawn Heights Golf Club, Akron, Ohio; L. M. Latta, Brae Burn Links, Copley, Ohio; Stanley Aldrich, Madison Golf Lakelands, Madison, Ohio; Fred Burkhardt, Westwood Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio; Arthur Boggs, Kirtland Country Club, Willoughby, Ohio; Wm. Smith, Silver Lake Country Club, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio; J. Nickoloff, Oberlin Golf Club, Oberlin, Ohio; Ralph Rodgers, Elyria Country Club, Elyria, Ohio; M. D. LaMoreaux, Kirtland Country Club, Willoughby, Ohio; F. P. Dunlap, Hawthorne Valley Golf Club, Solon, Ohio; R. Zink, Shaker Heights Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio; Percy J. Bolitho, Portage Country Club, Akron, Ohio; G. Duncan, Rosemont Country Club, Akron, Ohio; W. I. Kennedy, Bunker Hill Country Club, Medina, Ohio; J. A. Singler, Bunker Hill Country Club, Medina, Ohio; G. Kennedy, Fairlawn Heights Golf Club, Akron, Ohio; C. F. Miller, Orchard Hills Country Club, Canton, Ohio; John Sheridan, Chagrin Valley Country Club, Chagrin Falls, Ohio; Frank Shubie, Elyria Country Club, Elyria, Ohio; M. Lawrence, Hill Top Country Club, Wooster, Ohio.



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