

The Cissels Employ A Turf Bird

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Photos by Walter Argenbright, Jr., Etchison, Md.

It's not a bird, it's a plane and the boss is in it. Lambert Cissel . . .

WE lifted off from Plymouth, Ind., airport bound for Maryland with clouds hovering gray and windswept at only 2000 feet. Rain was moving in behind.

Promises for better weather turned out to be just promises. In the mountainous terrain of western Pennsylvania, we met the swirling fingers of a squall line.

We had been toying with the idea of climbing over the weather for the past 100 miles. If it meant climbing to 14,000 feet, we would need oxygen, and probably the only thing we didn't have was the oxygen tank.

My husband, Lambert, glanced toward me for a mental reading. Suddenly he decided, pushing the throttle to full power and pulling the nose high.

I began to wonder if we could go high enough, then stopped wondering and started watching the sweeping altimeter hand . . . 5000 feet . . . 7000, 9000, nothing.

Then at 10,500, the highest we had ever been, the plane suddenly popped into the clearest, brightest sunlight we had ever seen.

We rose to 11,500 and settled back for a peaceful trip across the moun-

tains. The engine purred like a sleeping cat.

This was our recent trip home from a Turf Field Day at Shamrock Turf Nurseries at Hanna, Ind. Total hours in the air: 4.5. Total miles traveled: 504. Overnight lodging fees: none.

Such are the stories told by those who run their sod business from a cockpit. Kimberthy Turf Farms is among them.

Kimberthy's "turf bird" is a dependable flying machine called the Cessna 180. Its 230 horses lift it easily from the shortest strips (including sod fields). This particular 180, a four-seater, has a cruise speed of 130 to 160 miles per hour and a cruise range of 700 miles to 800 miles. It is equipped with ADF, a 90-channel Lear (VHF), LF, Omni and a four-hour oxygen supply for five.

Lambert Cissel, president of Kimberthy and owner of the plane, considers the 180 more than a luxury item. It's a very real part of the business.

Sod hunting is its major asset. When the turf supply gets thin, Lambert takes to the air for a quick examination of the countryside.

Spotting a good turf field isn't

difficult, and at 140 crow-flying miles per hour, a lot of land can be combed in a short time.

At the same time, he can spot-check his crews. There's nothing like having the boss "drop in" to keep them on their toes.

On occasions, he has air-delivered pay checks.

It is on the long-range trip, however, that the turf bird really proves its worth. Several years ago, Lambert found he would have to wait at least a week for a tractor parts shipment from Richmond, Va. Instead, he took to the air and, despite one stop because of darkness and morning ground fog, got back in mid-afternoon of the next day.

Attending equipment demonstrations and field days are other activities when the plane is handy. Often, he drops in on neighboring turf producers, distant yet within the state, for their field days.

According to a magazine for those with flying interests, we aren't, by a long shot, the only ones floating our way through the business world. Some 1300 large companies and 11,000 small companies own and operate their own aircraft, the article said.

At least 40,000 aircraft are operated mainly for business purposes in the U.S., said the magazine. Business flying is a \$2 billion-a-year industry. Airplane costs range from a \$2,500 single engine radio equipped plane to a \$2 million jet.

If you wonder why we bother to

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Issue**

**D. W. Morrill Tells How
To Start a Sod Farm**



... lands his Cessna 180 to chat with employee James Austin, on the forklift.

use a plane when a great deal of its uses could be accomplished almost as well without leaving the ground, the first answer would be: To save time.

If you compare using your own plane with using a commercial plane, other good answers are: Independent scheduling, reliability, safety, reaching off-airline cities and airfields.

Our reasons for incorporating a plane into the business, initially, had nothing to do with saving time. We love to fly. With those who love to fly, as with those who hunt, boat or fish, any excuse to get out (or up) is a good one.

And when it's discovered this excuse not only saves time but gives a business-deductible pleasure as well, then why not?

We could find sod, deliver checks and travel without one, but we're sure it could not be done as effectively . . . and certainly not done with as much pleasure.

\$1 Buys 16 Publications On Lawns and Landscaping

A 16-page publication "package" on lawns and landscaping is available as a special offer from the Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University.

The price is \$1.00 for the 16 publications — cash, check or money order — from the Bulletin Office,

Box 231, East Lansing, Mich. 48823. The offer will be kept open until Aug. 1.

Subjects include planning a landscape, controlling insects, selection and planting of trees and shrubs, outdoor lighting, pruning, and paving of home grounds.

Michigan Golf Course Damage, Also

As a part of the June issue, we reported the presence of fairy ring on one Michigan sod farm.

In his spring turf report, Dr. James Beard, crop scientist at Michigan State University, has identified *Fusarium* blight as the cause of the dead rings of grass.

"In most cases, spring kill in the circular ring pattern cannot be attributed to the direct activity of *Fusarium* blight," said Beard.

"It appears there is an interaction between the *Fusarium* blight disease and low temperature kill. The turf in these circular rings has been weakened by *Fusarium* activity the previous summer and fall. Actual kill was caused by direct low temperature in-

Grass Use, Crop Forecast Reported at Merion Meeting

Record disappearance, or use, of Merion Kentucky bluegrass — 5,246,004 lbs. — was reported at the recent 16th annual meeting in Spokane, Wash., of the Merion Bluegrass Association.

Unsold grass inventory was listed at 1,925,443 lbs. of quality seed. Crop statistics indicate an acreage decrease in this year. The 10,687-acre production estimate compares with 12,305 acres harvested in 1968. It was concluded that Merion still led the field, due to its built-in promotion program and its good dealer profit margin.

Arden Jacklin of Jacklin Seed Company, Dishman, Wash., was re-elected association president. Other officers are Arnie Bonnicksen of Western Farmers Association, Pasco, Wash., vice-president; Dick Bailey of W. R. Grace and Company, Rudy-Patrick Division, Hal-say, Ore., treasurer, and James Eveson, La Grande, Ore., secretary.

Directors are George Royes of George Royes Grass Seeds, Imbler, Ore.; Ted Freeman of Madras, Ore.; Bill Rose of Woodburn, Ore.; Elmer Schneidmiller of Liberty Lake, Wash.; A. B. Renz of Veradale, Wash., in addition to Jacklin, Bonnicksen and Bailey.

jury to the hydrated plants within the weakened region of the ring."

Dr. Beard, also in the spring report, said Michigan golf courses suffered extensive damage last winter from desiccation. He described injury to greens "more severe in 1969 than in the previous ten years."

"The absence of snow cover combined with low temperatures and high winds resulted in severe injury to elevated, exposed slopes and high spots on many golf courses and very extensive injury to greens. Severe injury was most common on greens where an extensive thatch was present or where a late fall aeration was practiced with the holes left open throughout the winter."