

OUTLOOK

By Bruce F. Shank, Editor

Chicago's Butler National golf course has become the world's largest turf laboratory. Turf experts from across the U.S. are flying into Chicago to get samples of the diseased Toronto bentgrass that turned the greens of Butler National an embarrassing brown prior to the Western Open. An absolute identification of the disease which devastated the greens will take a few more months. Samples of the fungus must be isolated and proven harmful to healthy Toronto bentgrass. Only then can the real guilty fungus be identified.

Meanwhile, Dr. Joe Duich of Pennsylvania State University is directing renovation of the Toronto greens with Penneagle, a bentgrass he selected and developed. At the same time, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has sponsored a research committee headed by nationally known turf-

grass pathologist Houston Couch from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg.

The list of those involved in the postmortem at Butler National reads like the *Whos' Who* of turfgrass research. It has been a long time since one golf course has drawn so much research attention. GCSAA is looking at the cause of the disease, the maintenance history of the course, and the role of the superintendent in the problem.

According to Fred Grau, the incident spells the end of monoculture vegetative creeping bents. Seed from polycrossed bentgrasses will now have the clear vote of confidence of superintendents and turf researchers. It also signifies the critical importance of paying heed to advances in turfgrass culture. Turfgrass pathologists themselves disagree on many points of their

science. Only further research can clear up the confusion.

The people involved are taking this problem seriously and using it to test their problem solving ability in a real field situation rather than in a laboratory. The club is cooperating amazingly. Butler National will not let its reputation falter by one incident. Rather than hiding behind some public relations barricade, it is opening its doors to turf scientists and to GCSAA and USGA.

Perhaps if more clubs with turf incidents opened their courses up to turf specialists we would have more practical solutions in shorter time. Scientists need the field challenges and the financial support to apply their research. Perhaps Butler National has opened the gate to more rapid progress with turf management.

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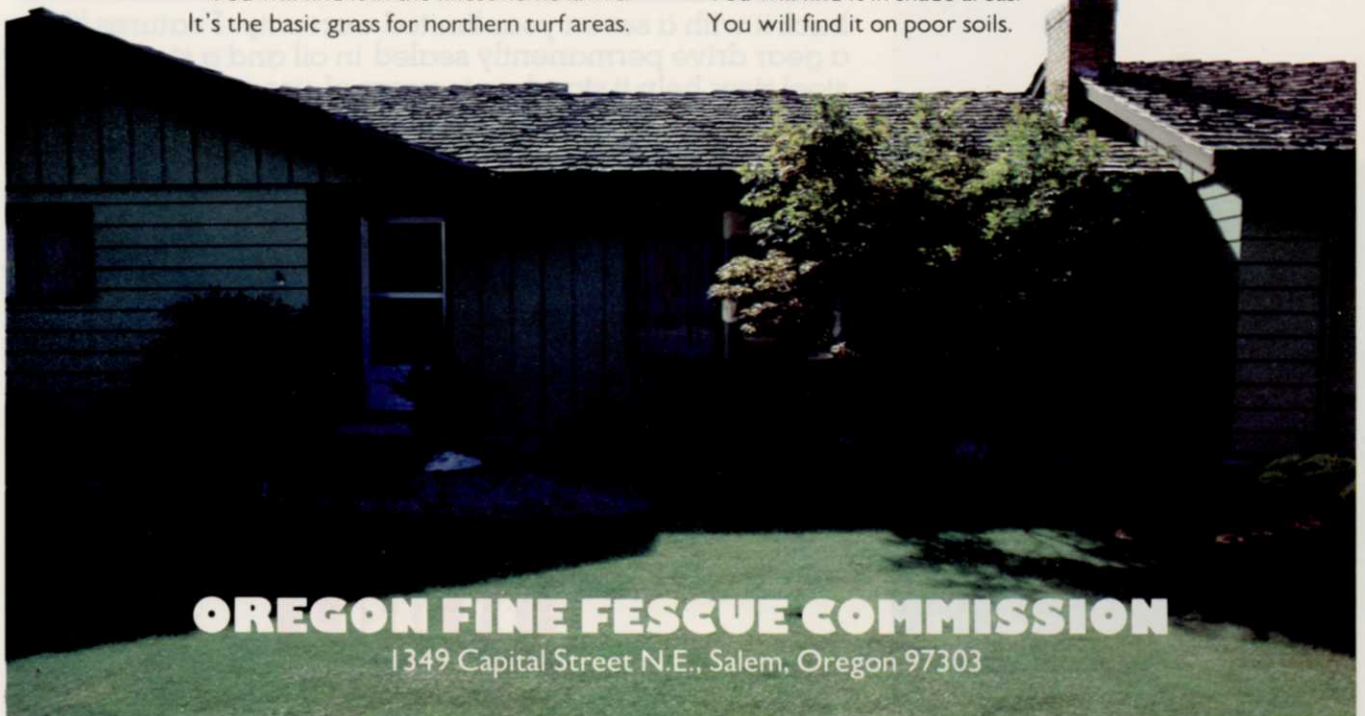
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