Grass Clippings

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DECISION ON NEW GRASSES

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Improved turf grasses are the best answer to better golf turf. The Golf Course Superintendent is alert to the need for better grasses, and frequently, must decide if new grasses are of any value to him. Certainly, a new grass should not be used extensively without careful study.

Whenever, there is interest in a new grass, the superintendent may have opportunity to observe it on experiment station plots or an occasional golf course or other turf area where it is being tried. Look at these plantings at different seasons and as often as opportunity affords. Observations of this type may convince you that the grass may or may not be worthy of further consideration for your course.

A new grass should always be considered for its tolerance to mowing, wet soils, dry soils, infertile soils, and shade. Also, its durability, quality, resistance to weeds, and resistance to disease are very important. As a final test a good grass for a specific site should provide good turf when the area is used most. Any one of the above factors or a combination of several might make the grass of little value for the job at hand. For example, we would not use a red fescue on wet and poorly drained areas.

With the approach of summer weather, attention will again turn to warm-season grasses such as Zoysia or U3 Bermuda. In spite of the good qualities of these grasses they also have unfavorable characteristics that limit their usefulness. Before a large scale planting is made, consider the fact that these grasses remain brown approximately 6 months during cold weather. This may be important on some courses and of little consequence on others. Also, it is questionable if the perennial cool-season grasses can be grown successfully with Bermuda and Zoysia to provide green color in winter.

As with most other new grasses, the management of Zoysia and U3 Bermuda is comparatively unknown. Experience and study to date indicates that warm weather fertilization and close mowing favors these grasses. U3 Bermuda has winter-killed as a result of heavy trampling through the winter or transplanting during the later half of the summer. All of these and additional factors need more study; and they help illustrate the many problems associated with proper selection and use of a new grass.

Usually a new grass will not be of universal value for all courses. With regard to U3 Bermuda and Zoysia, these grasses may find no use on many courses, while some may find them suited to their needs. Certainly the individual should see some promise in a new grass before establishing a trial planting.

Whenever, a planting or seeding of a new grass is made, be sure to select an area that will receive regular maintenance. Often times a plot can be selected on small isolated sections of fairway, along the outside of a fairway, or across the end of a fairway. Practice greens or practice tees are good areas for experimentation. Some superintendents have experimented with U3 Bermuda on 1/2 of a wide tee or on tees where a second teeing area is available. Use care to keep Bermuda grass away from greens. It is suggested that a trial plot might be at least 10 feet wide and 30 feet long. Experiences encountered on areas of this size give a good idea as to the desirability of further planting.

We have sufficient knowledge of our common turf grasses to permit wise and successful use. When the occasion arises, these grasses are planted extensively. However, when dealing with newer grasses such as Zoysia and Bermuda that are not thoroughly understood, trial plantings are preferred until the grass proves itself.

MALEIC HYDRAZIDE AS A TURF RETARDANT

Maleic hydrazide is a chemical that is being sold and advertised as a growth inhibitor for turf grasses and other plant species. This chemical was used on turf in Experiment Station trials in 1949, 1950 and 1952. Treatments were made at rates of 1½ and 3 pounds per acre of maleic hydrazide. Growth control was partial with the lower rate and quite complete with the higher rate. Considerable turf injury was inflicted in all three seasons with the higher rate. All grasses did not react to the same degree. In one instance Kentucky bluegrass continued to grow more rapidly than the other species which resulted in an uneven appearance of the turf. In another, where crabgrass was present, maleic hydrazide encouraged crabgrass by inhibiting the turf grasses and failing to check the crabgrass.

It is suggested that maleic hydrazide be used on turf only on an experimental or trial basis. The danger of inflicting turf injury and increasing the amount of weeds may limit the usefulness of maleic hydrazide in the turf field. It is suggested that the average lawn owner might leave trial and experimentation with maleic hydrazide to the professional turf grower.

MEETING NOTICE

Meeting at Esso Research Center, Linden, N. J.

Tuesday, May 12, 1953.

ARRIVE AT 11 A.M. SHARP

Program consists of inspection of lawns, shrubs, drainage system, grounds maintenance equipment and shops, ending with Lunch at about 1:00 P. M. After lunch, the program will be continued indoors with discussions on fungicides, weed control and the maintenance of grounds equipment. The program will be completed at about 3:15 p.m.

Host, Mr. T. A. Manning, Asst. Supt.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Enclosed all you regular members will find a letter concerning the 1953 Turf Tournament.

As you probably know the tournament originated with a few of our members, so let's get behind the TURF TOURNAMENT in '53, - Rutgers will benefit and so will you.

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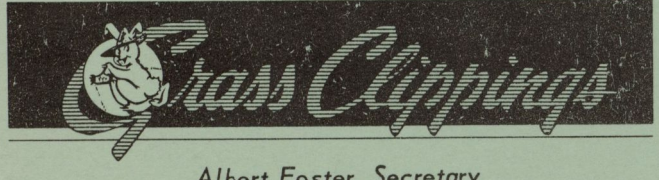

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