UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION
GREEN SECTION
Southeastern Office
Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station
TIFTON, GEORGIA

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SOUTHEASTERN TURFLETTER

Vol. 2 No. 1 April 1955

The USGA Green Section has five regional offices offering Regional Turf Service to subscribing clubs. It is the purpose of the regional offices and Turf Service to help golf clubs with their turf grass problems, to insure that new developments are promptly available, and to promote turf research. This is accomplished through visits to subscribing clubs by the Regional Directors, Turfletters, Turf Management Section of the USGA Journal, correspondence, phone calls, and conferences and group meetings with the club superintendents and greens chairmen.

It has been gratifying to observe the response of golf clubs in the Southeast to the program. Since the Southeastern office was established April 1, 1954, over ninety golf clubs have subscribed to the turf service. Your suggestions on how we can improve the Turfletter and one-half day visits are welcomed. We want to offer the best turf service possible to our subscribing clubs. Suggestions from your club will help us.

PROBLEMS - THERE ARE MANY

When we meet with superintendents in various sections of the Southeast, they are always interested in the problems of other areas. Do their distant neighbors have their troubles and how are they combating them? A summarization of some of the turf problems or questions encountered during visits to golf courses last season follows:

IMPROVED GRASSES - Many clubs are interested in establishing one of the improved grasses. Bermudas and bents are receiving attention. Which grass should be used? What is the quickest and best method of converting old turf without interfering with play? Should our greens be plowed or renovated? Where can pure planting stock be obtained?

Proper management of the grasses is important. After establishment, many superintendents find it necessary to change their management practices to obtain the best performance of improved grasses. Tiffine, Gene Tift, and Everglades Bermudas are

being used for putting greens. Tiflawn and Ormand, and in some cases the Bermudas used for greens, are performing well on fairways and tees. C-1 (Arlington) and C-19 (Congressional) bent selections have been used for bent grass putting greens. A new bent, Pennlu, has performed well in experimental plantings. Several Bermudas introduced from South Africa and a new hybrid (Tifton 328) are looking good for greens in test plantings. Other improved selections of Bermudas and bents are on the way.

YEAR-ROUND BERMUDA GREENS - Can Bermuda be used for year round putting greens? Only clubs in Florida and along the lower coastal areas have been successful in maintaining good putting surfaces of improved Bermudas without overseeding with cool season grasses (rye, bent, Kentucky Blue, etc.). Special attention, however, is needed.

BENT GREENS FOR THE SOUTH - Is it possible to grow bent in the South? Howfar South can it be grown as year-round putting green turf? What are the requirements for growth and green construction? Bent greens are being maintained successfully as far south as Nashville and Chattanooga, Tennessee. Trial greens in Atlanta have met with varied success. The USGA Green Section in cooperation with a local club plans to establish an experimental bent green in Atlanta. We need to know more about the various bents and their management for the South.

SOMETHING BESIDES RYE - Are there grasses other than ryegrass used to overseed Bermuda greens? Ryegrass is used most extensively, but is sometimes mixed with Kentucky Bluegrass, red top, bent, etc. A few clubs have tried bent for winter greens with good success.

TRANSITION PERIOD - How can we overcome the transition from winter to Bermuda greens? Is it good practice to burn out the winter greens or help nature in making a natural transition? Improved Bermudas and management have decreased this problem. Turfletter No. 2 gave hints on fall preparation for the spring transition. Our next Turfletter will give hints on spring management to help overcome the transition.

TOPDRESSING - What is the best mixture for topdressing greens? What can be used other than peat for organic matter? Sources for the preparation of good topdressing mixtures are critical in many areas and the purchase of desirable materials is costly. Topdressing mixtures, therefore, vary. Changing from one material to another has resulted, in many cases, in the production of undesirable layers in putting greens. This means extra maintenance. An answer to the best mixtures should result from the USGA sponsored fellowship at Texas A & M College. Are some weed problems due to contaminated topdressing? Clubs which are treating their topdressing for weed seed and disease control consider the results obtained as good maintenance insurance.

FERTILIZATION - Our first Turfletter pointed out the value of soil tests. More clubs need to take advantage of this service. Results of tests during the past few years indicate that most putting greens have a high to excess phosphorus but low potash content. There appears to be a need for more nitrogen, especially on fairways and tees. What is the best fertilizer for turf grass? Many methods and type of fertilizers are used. Fertility studies being conducted at Tifton, Georgia, and Gainesville, Florida, should answer many questions on the fertilization of turf grasses.

DISEASE CONTROL - What is a good spray for disease control? Several diseases are damaging to Bermuda and winter grasses in the Southeast. A good control program should be centered first on the identity of the organism, and second on preventative treatments. No one material has been effective as a preventative or curative treatment on all the diseases. A combination of materials seems to be necessary for control.

INSECT CONTROL - Many clubs had heavy attacks of sod webworms, cutworms, and army worms last summer. Watch for these insects again this year. Ruth or Bermudagrass scale was found active in all Southeastern states. Much of the drought injury to Bermuda fairways was increased due to attacks by scales and sod webworms.

NEMATODES - What are nematodes? How do they attack turf grasses? Do we have nematodes in our greens? Nematodes and related parasites are more commonly known as eelworms or roundworms. Those which are apparently causing a lot of damage to grasses attack the root systems. Several parasetic types have been identified from samples of putting greens, tees, and fairways. Affected turf may appear thin, chloratic at times, wilt easily, show slow growth, etc. The damage may be confused with other turf grass problems. A USGA sponsored fellowship at the University of Florida and the work at Tifton should answer many of our questions on nematodes and turf grasses.

WEED CONTROL - The Southeast certainly has its share of weed control problems. Poa annua, bull grass (related to Dallis), Dallis grass, crabgrass, crowfoot, watergrass (Sedge), nutgrass, clover, carpet weed or spotted spurge, pennywart, dichronda, sandspur, wild onion and garlic share the control spotlight. Several herbicides or combinations of herbicides are effective in controlling these and other weeds. Sodium arsenite, lead arsenite, 2,4-D forumations, potassium cyanate, MAS, and nitrogen fertilizers have been most extensively used. Superintendents, however, should consider the use of pre-emergence herbicides (CRAG Herbicide, etc.) for the control of annual weeds and the use of some of the more non-selective herbicides (Dalapon, Amino triazol, etc.) for the sterilization of non-grassed areas. Do not overlook the use of new herbicides (di-sodium methyl arsenate, etc.) for the control of crabgrass or other weeds. Sterilization of topdressing material prevents the contamination of putting greens. Calcium cyanamid, methyl bromide, and steam are used most extensively for this phase of weed control.

"Spare that tree!" This is the cry that is often heard when it becomes necessary to prune or remove trees in order to produce satisfactory turf on tees and greens. Trees which reduce the growth of grass by competing for nutrients, water, and light are weeds. Many clubs, however, are not producing satisfactory Bermuda grass turf on greens and tees because of trees surrounding the area. In some cases, thinning of branches and root pruning has resulted in marked improvement.