Demonstration Turf Garden at Charles River Country Club

By Frank H. Wilson, Jr.
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When we were asked to start a demonstration turf garden at Charles River Country Club, Newton Centre, Mass., little did I realize the great value such a project could be to the golf clubs of this section of the country. The interest in the garden was continuous from early spring until the ground became covered with snow. Hardly a day went by without some greenkeeper or green-committee chairman making us a visit. Two meetings were held at the garden during the season, one in May by the Greenkeepers' Club of New England and one in September by the New England Service Bureau in conjunction with the Greenkeepers' Club. At the May meeting the greenkeepers showed much enthusiasm over the work, and monthly thereafter reports of results and observations have been printed in their *Newsletter*. At the September meeting 26 clubs were represented. In one instance the garden was used by a green-committee chairman and his greenkeeper to determine what kind of grass should be selected to plant greens on their course, and in another instance to determine what kind of bent stolons should be planted on a certain course. The garden has been generally educational. I have spent many hours explaining the work on the garden, and have received a great deal of pleasure and profit from it. Our optional plots have been occupied by four clubs that had strains of bent grasses which they thought possessed special merit; these strains are being compared with the grasses in rows 2 and 3.

The thing that strikes me most forcibly at the end of this first season's work at the garden is the everlasting change in appearance, showing that one can not pass final judgment on any single grass or fertilizer without careful observation over a long period. Weather conditions, disease, and other factors change the appearance of a grass from one week to another. One plot in particular which was extremely fine throughout the spring was completely wiped out by leaf-spot in July.

We have achieved some outstanding results. On the fairway plots the watered section was much better than the unwatered section, due to an extremely dry summer, except that the unwatered plot of Chewings' fescue and German mixed bent did well and stands out as the leading fairway mixture. Arsenate of lead injured the seedling turf, did not control earthworms, but did eradicate chickweed. Plots treated with organic fertilizers seemed to stand up under the summer heat better than those treated with inorganic fertilizers. In the selection of grasses for putting greens by those who visited the plots, color and texture seemed to be the deciding factors. Few seemed to take into consideration susceptibility to disease and other factors.

The work has been of great value to me in the operation of my own course and should be increasingly so as time goes on. The old adage "seeing is believing" holds good here. I have changed my fertilizer program to some extent because of results brought out on the plots. The results on the fairway plots will save time and money in the renovation and building up of fairways. The fertilizer plots of German mixed bent cut to putting green height certainly keep one thinking. I feel that other clubs also have benefited by using the

garden. The growing of the various leading putting green grasses in close proximity to each other is very helpful. The most important thing of all is the fact that the garden has become a meeting place for those who have the care of golf courses. We have also had a few gardeners visit the plots. Such an undertaking is useful in direct proportion to the interest shown in it, and I feel that our garden has been well worth while.

Control of Coco or Nut Grass on Southern Golf Courses

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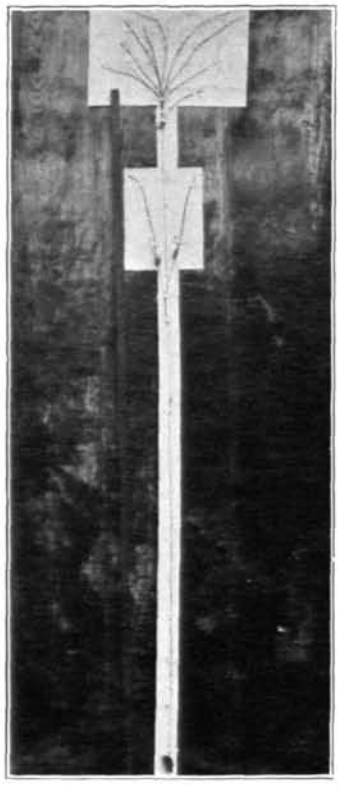

A single plant of nut grass which developed from a tuber buried 6 feet in the soil. The original tuber from which the plant developed is seen at the base of the stem. About three-fourths up the stem a pair of underground rootstocks have developed, each bearing a tuber. It required 18 months for the upward growing stem to reach the surface of the soil.

In the South, coco or nut grass is one of the worst weeds in golf course turf. It is found in all the States bordering the coast line from New York to Texas, also in southern California. It does not seriously infest any of the inland States except Arkansas. It is objectionable in turf because of its characteristic growth, which interferes with the true rolling of the ball on a putting green. It is also objectionable in sand traps.

The character which makes nut grass so very pernicious is its habit of tuber production. Each of its tubers is capable of producing from 1 to 50 plants. The tuber normally sends up a slender thread, at the top of which a new plant is formed. As the plant matures, it usually enlarges at the base, forming a basal tuber, which in turn sends out lateral threads or rhizomes. Each of these rhizomes may form a new plant directly, or it may grow deeper into the soil, swelling at intervals, thus forming the chain of nuts so characteristic of the grass. Each of these new nuts may germinate and form new plants the same season, or it may remain dormant until the following season and then germinate. At the Delta branch experiment station, Stoneville, Miss., one nut planted in a 2-foot tile produced more than 1,100 nuts in a single growing season. The tip of the burrowing thread or rhizome is very sharp and is capable of piercing potatoes, dahlia bulbs, and similar growths. Nuts have been known to germinate and force their way through ordinary tar roofing paper, form a new plant, and continue to grow. At this station one nut buried 6 feet deep in the soil germinated, sent a long slender thread upward, reached the surface after 18 months, and produced a strong, vigorous plant.