

## BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY WELCOMES TURF CULTURE

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The grasses make up the most important group of plants on this earth. The value of the grasses grown in the temperate zones lies in two essential uses—as food for men and animals and as a ground cover. Various members of the grass family have been cultivated for food purposes for centuries. In addition to those which are grown for grain, the cereals, there is the even larger group of grasses which provides the principal feed supply of our livestock. Grasses are used also to retain or improve the soil, but even when planted for that primary purpose they have usually been considered as well from the standpoint of providing feed for livestock.

Another most important use of grass, and the one we are interested in here, is as a ground cover in the many and varied situations where it is desired to have a low dense mat of foliage easily maintained throughout the season. Such a covering of turf is required on many areas such as lawns, parks, golf courses and other sports fields, cemeteries, airports, roadsides, and other places.

When grasses are grown for hay or pasturage, the objective is to produce maximum yields of herbage. On the other hand, when grasses are grown primarily for turf, the objective is to obtain a low dense coverage of foliage but with a minimum yield of herbage so that mowing and other maintenance costs can be kept at a minimum. Many of the grasses used for pasturage and hay are commonly used for the production of turf. Naturally, many of the fundamental principles involved in the

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Airplane view of a small portion of the Bureau of Plant Industry Experimental Farm at Arlington, Va., showing the Turf Garden in the center.

cultivation of these grasses for pastures and hay apply when they are used for turf purposes. If, however, the same species of grass is to give best returns in the way of maximum yields of hay or forage on the one hand, and the best results in turf with a minimum of mowing costs on the other hand, the cultural practices must be modified in some manner to attain these entirely different end products. Different selected varieties of any species of grass may also in part help to attain these distinctly different objectives. Naturally, too, some species of grass that have little or no value for hay or pasturage offer considerable promise for development as turf-forming grasses.

The grasses that are grown for their grain have been studied and improved for hundreds of years. Our Federal and State

experiment stations have long conducted intensive work on these plants. It is only recently, however, that these agencies began intensive study of grasses for hay or pasture purposes, but there is still a minimum of research on grasses for turf purposes. This latter situation should be corrected as rapidly as facilities can be made available.



Part of the grass nursery at the Arlington Turf Garden.

The numerous letters received each year by the Department of Agriculture from one end of the country to the other indicate a widespread interest in turf for lawns, parks, various types of recreational fields, cemeteries, airports, road shoulders, and other areas where the public is interested in getting a maximum of coverage with a minimum of cost and effort. In answering these inquiries the Department of Agriculture makes frequent use of the results of the work conducted cooperatively with the United States Golf Association Green Section.

Federal research work on the culture of grasses is conducted by the Bureau of Plant Industry. Formal cooperation between

this Bureau and the United States Golf Association dates from 1920, though even earlier the Bureau was interested in the problems of turf. The Bureau appreciates the opportunity to cooperate with the United States Golf Association Green Section in any way possible to encourage research on turf, and it welcomes the appearance of *TURF CULTURE* as a medium through which the results of these studies may be made available to the public. This publication should be of interest not only to the golfing public but also to lovers of beautiful lawns and to those interested in the establishment and maintenance of turf for parks, various kinds of recreational fields, cemeteries, airports, road shoulders, and all other areas where it is desired to get a good coverage with no excessive production of foliage. May it grow and prosper!



Applying chemicals to plots on the Arlington Turf Garden.