# AMERICAN SOCIETY OF AGRONOMY TURF REPORT

The Turf Committee has had neither the occasion nor the opportunity to meet during the year but several matters have been discussed by mail.

A mail survey was made among the members for information on the value of hormone treatments for lawn-grass seeds. Replies were unanimously negative. This report has been substantiated by R. H. Porter in THE BOTANICAL REVIEW, Vol. XV, No. 5, May, 1949. Thus, it can be stated authoritatively that "hormone-treated" lawn-grass seeds have no extra value to justify a premium being paid by the consumer.

The distressing water situation in many parts of the country is such that the Turf Committee recommends strongly in favor of studies to save water. It is well known that many extensive turf areas consistently are overwatered. This results in a wastage of precious water and in deterioration of turf quality. Research, resident teaching and extension teaching can render valuable service not only to turf but to all agriculture and to industry by stressing these factors:

1. Reduce runoff and save rainfall by keeping soil open and porous by cultivation, aeration and other cultural practices.
2. Reduce irrigation needs by more adequate fertilization.
3. Increase the use of drought-tolerant and low moisture-requirement grasses.

There is a real need for wider coordinated testing of new types of turf grasses in uniform turf nurseries similar to the uniform nurseries of forage grasses which had yielded so much valuable information. It will be important to organize these nurseries soon because of the accelerated breeding program on turf grasses now in progress at several experiment stations. The USGA Green Section and the Division of Forage Crops and Diseases, U. S. Department of Agriculture, offer their services in developing these nurseries.

Research in turf has reached a new high level in quantity and in coordination. It is obvious that both resident teaching and extension teaching need support and encouragement in this specialized phase of agriculture so that the full value of contemporary research may be realized. Many of the recommendations for the establishment and care of lawns, for example, have resulted in repeated failures at a huge total cost to millions of taxpayers. The present effort to produce a satisfactory chemical to control crabgrass is a frank admission that the grasses in common use are unsatisfactory. We are forced to continue to recommend them until there is something better. It is the considered opinion of the Turf Committee that equal effort be expended on each of the several methods of crabgrass control (as an example):

1. Biological (better grasses)
2. Chemical
3. Mechanical
4. Management

It is the pleasure of the Committee to report that the performance of several new strains of turf grasses are definitely superior to commercial types now on the market. They include:

1. Merion (B-27) bluegrass. Characterized by high degree of tolerance to Helminthosporium leafspot, high degree of apomixis, tolerance to close mowing (as close as ½ inch), and tolerance to heat and drought.
2. U-3 Bermudagrass. Characterized by fine texture (similar to bentgrass), high degree of cold tolerance, extreme wear resistance and drought tolerance. Reproduced clonally.
3. Tifton 57 Bermudagrass. Characterized by high tolerance to disease, aggressiveness, fine texture, and ease of maintenance. Reproduced clonally.
4. Z-52 strain of Japanese lawngrass. Characterized by medium texture and good summer color

(both similar to B-27 bluegrass), aggressiveness, freedom from weeds, ease of maintenance and heat, cold and drought and insect tolerance. Reproduced clonally.

From observations and from fragmentary data, the Committee expresses the opinion that one of the fruitful lines of research in specialized turf is the study of combinations of cool-season and warm-season grasses.

An approximation of acreage in grass and turf along highways in Texas, Kansas and Georgia indicates that roughly 2,000,000 acres of land are involved. It will be virtually impossible to obtain accurate figures for all the states, but it is at once apparent that the roadside areas in the United States should be of concern to all of us, regardless of our interests. Well-turfed shoulders can contribute to the safety and the appearance of a highway. Noxious weeds in highway areas are of direct concern to land owners in agricultural areas. Lowered costs of establishment and maintenance are of interest to everyone.

The committee recommends a continuing study of this phase of turf work.

The Department of the Army has furnished these figures which represent additional acreage in grass hitherto unreported:

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| National cemeteries | 769,826 |
| Army posts, camps and stations | 1,077,020 |
| Army industrial facilities | 226,780 |
| | 2,073,626 |

Other military land classed as hay, pasture or range totals 1,780,500 acres.

It is obvious that the specialized uses of grass for various types of turf are receiving less than their share of attention in relation to the acreage involved, taxes paid and with respect to their relative value. It is recommended that the turf uses of various grasses be given their commensurate share with forage uses in research, teaching and extension programs. Experiment Stations are urged to develop close cooperation with turf associations to insure research studies of a practical nature for maximum support for the turf program.

1949 TURF COMMITTEE
F. V. Grau, *Chairman*

## NATIONAL TURF FIELD DAY

Plans for the third annual National Turf Field Day at Washington, D. C., October 15, 16 and 17 have been discussed by the joint planning committee of the USGA Green Section and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Greenkeepers. The Committee consists of Hugh McRae, President, Mid-Atlantic Association of Greenkeepers, Robert Scott, William H. Glover, R. P. Hines, O. B. Fitts, Dick Watson, Marvin H. Ferguson, Charles G. Wilson and Fred V. Grau.

On Sunday evening, October 15, there will be a meeting of all technical men engaged in turf work for the purpose of outlining turf research work now in progress throughout the United States. The entire evening will be devoted to this feature.

On Monday, October 16, the group will visit the turf plots at the Beltsville Turf Gardens, Plant Industry Station, Beltsville, Md. A short social hour and dinner are planned for that evening.

On Tuesday, October 17, visits will be made to two golf courses, the newly built Woodmont Country Club, near Rockville, Md., and the Fairfax Country Club in Fairfax, Va. At these courses the group will see various kinds of turf under actual play. There will be features on tees, greens, fairways and nurseries.

Field Day headquarters will be the Hamilton Hotel, 14th and K Streets, Washington, D. C. Please make your reservations directly with the hotel. Further information may be obtained from Hugh McRae, 3029 Klingle Road, N. W., Washington, D. C., or O. B. Fitts, Columbia Country Club, Chevy Chase, Md.