

A TURF NURSERY AS INSURANCE

Some golf clubs have turf nurseries. Many golf clubs operate without them. We believe that the modern golf club hardly can afford to operate without a turf nursery.

A turf nursery is like an insurance policy to the golf course. It is a protection against disaster. It is your bet that disaster won't strike. If it does, you are protected. If it doesn't, you're still ahead.

A turf nursery is your private experiment station. Technical men in the USGA Green Section, in the state experiment stations and in various laboratories can develop new grasses, new chemicals and new machines, but they can't prove them on *your golf course*. A turf nursery allows you to experiment (and ruin some turf if necessary) with new ideas and new chemicals which have no business on turf which members are using. If you ruin some turf in the nursery, who cares? That is why it is there.

When someone develops a new grass, are you going to sit back and say, "I'll wait until the price of the seed comes down. Then I'll try some." Or, are you going to be among the first to get a few ounces or a few pounds and try it in your turf nursery? No one is going to bring the new grass to you, but if you have a place ready to plant some, you will be a lot more receptive to the idea.

Your members look to you, the green-keeper or the golf-course superintendent, to give them the latest word on new things (especially for their lawns.). A turf nursery will keep you up-to-date and on your toes. If you let your members plant some new grass on their lawns before you have tried it in your turf nursery, some questions are bound to be asked.

A turf nursery provides a continual source of interest for meetings and for discussions with your fellow superintendents. Your USGA Green Section and your state experiment station workers in turf look to you and to your turf nursery

for the acid test of things which they have developed. With a turf nursery you become an active member of the research team in the National Coordinated Turf Program. Your profession will gain in stature as you develop and test new ideas in your turf nursery.

We don't get to see all of the turf nurseries at our member clubs but we have been rather unhappy to find so few adequate nurseries during our visits around the country. In order to encourage the practice, we should like to outline a few principles for developing a turf nursery under various conditions:

THE SITE: It should be close to the maintenance buildings where pride in appearance will be a strong factor in keeping it in first-class condition.

THE SOIL: For a nursery of putting-green turf, the soil should be prepared to conform to the texture in the regular greens so that there will be no abrupt change when sods or plugs are moved. Fairway and tee turf may be grown on "normal" existing soil, similar to that in the areas in play. By all means, provide good subdrainage and good surface drainage.

WATER: Yes; water is needed. Provide suitable outlets to water when needed.

PREPARATION: Good seedbed preparation is mandatory. The use of lime (if needed) and fertilizer according to requirements is only common sense. Ample fertilizer especially is important when rapid vegetative increase of superior varieties is the objective. Weed seeds can be destroyed prior to planting by three methods: (1) long months of tilling the soil, (2) cyanamid applied at 50 to 75 pounds to 1,000 square feet of area, followed by a wait of four to six weeks before planting, and (3) methyl bromide, after which planting can be done in 48 hours. For specific recommendations on the best method in individual cases consult your county agent, your extension specialist or your experiment station.

Weed-free nurseries are economical to establish and maintain.

WHAT TO PLANT: It depends upon your principal problem and where you are. The basic idea is to develop the superior strains of grasses primarily, with a limited area devoted to the common types of turf now in use on the course. This will provide direct comparisons, and it may speed the day when the newer types of turf will be used generally.

Creeping bents — Arlington (C-1), Congressional (C-19), Collins (C-27), Cohansey (C-7), Toronto (C-15), Old Orchard (C-52), Dahlgren (C-115) and Polycross creeping bent seed. Your experiment station may suggest others which are important locally.

Bluegrass — Merion.

Fescue — Reserve an area for Penn State's new polycross creeping red fescue (perhaps there will be a little seed for testing next year) to compare with standard varieties now on the market.

Bermuda — Tifton 57, Tifton 127, Gene Tift, U-3.

Zoysia — Meyer (Z-52) alone and in combination with the best cool-season grasses.

Centipede — Oklahoma's winter-hardy strain, Georgia's red-stemmed strain.

MAINTENANCE: A few nurseries will grow stolons or sprig material of the best grasses. All nurseries need finished sod always ready for immediate use. Maintenance will conform generally to the regular practices except where "experimental design" dictates variations in water, fertilizer, aerifying, etc. Some superintendents put their putting-green nurseries in "hot spots" surrounded by trees with stagnant air, and less than normal water and fungicides in order to eliminate the unadapted strains of grasses. The unforgivable sin where turf nurseries are concerned is neglect. It is true that the maintenance of the course budget should provide specifically for the development and maintenance of an adequate turf nursery in order to insure the maintenance of a good golf course.

MERION BLUEGRASS STUDY

The USGA Green Section is conducting a nation-wide survey in an effort to develop uniform recommendations on the establishment and management of Merion bluegrass. The survey has been circulated among all cooperators in the National Coordinated Turf Program, members of the Turf Committee of the American Society of Agronomy, members of the USGA Green Section Committee and seedsmen who are USGA Green Section Service Subscribers.

Some of the questions include rates of seeding, suggestions on mixtures, methods of renovating unsatisfactory turf, fertilization, height of cut, watering procedures, aerifying and herbicide suggestions. Each cooperator has been asked to name the points of disadvantage of Merion bluegrass so that the public can be informed accurately what to expect when Merion bluegrass seed is planted. In many cases

people have expected too much too soon and consequently have been disappointed.

Readers of the USGA JOURNAL who have not been contacted directly by this memorandum are asked to write in giving their experiences with Merion bluegrass, paying particular attention to any disappointments that might have occurred either through misunderstanding or lack of information. Our confidence in Merion bluegrass as a superior turf grass increases, but we want to state clearly that Merion bluegrass is not a "miracle grass" or a "wonder grass." When Merion bluegrass is properly understood, properly established and properly managed it is far superior to any other bluegrass on the market.

Results of the survey will be published in the USGA JOURNAL so that the information will be available to readers before they purchase their Merion bluegrass seed this fall.