

Worth-While Meetings

Golf clubs sometimes invite local golf course superintendents' associations to hold regular monthly meetings at their courses. However, few club members fully appreciate the value derived in producing better turf for better golf because in the past such meetings often were little more than congenial get-togethers.

As an example of how this picture has changed in recent years for the benefit of the individual superintendent, and for the club he represents, we cite the strong educational program developed by the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association.

In an effort to make their monthly meetings worth-while for their superintendents and for the host club, the Rocky Mountain superintendents issue an advance listing of all meetings for the year with the times, dates, places and educational features to be discussed.

In addition, they also pass out inspection forms to the visiting superintendents. This form provides space for suggestions on such course maintenance practices as mowing heights and frequency, irrigation, fertilization, aerification, weed programs and labor, as well as suggestions with regard to trees and shrubs, appearance at entrance and on first tee, general landscaping, flower beds, parking areas, lawns and nurseries. The visiting superintendent can compile information which may be helpful to his home course and the host superintendent receives constructive suggestions which may be helpful to the sponsoring club.

It is gratifying to note that the Rocky Mountain Golf Course Superintendents Association, as well as many other local associations, are making every effort to produce better turf for the individual golfer's enjoyment. To accomplish this end, the progressive superintendent of today realizes that no individual can ever corner the market on turf information and true knowledge is the result of a free exchange of ideas and experiences developed at group meetings.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Are the so-called tissue tests more accurate than soil tests?

ANSWER: Not at the present time. Tissue tests have an advantage in that they actually measure the amount of nutrients that have been taken out of the soil by the plant. Tissue tests, therefore, seem capable of giving a very accurate assay of the amount of a mineral nutrient that the plant is getting from the soil. At the present time, however, there are not many plants for which we know what the levels of sufficiency are. Therefore, even after the tissue tests are made and the amounts of nutrient elements determined, we do not know whether this is more than is necessary or whether it is less than is necessary for good plant growth. Only after many tissue tests have been made and have been correlated with the growth of the plants will we be able to determine from these tests whether or not we will need to add more fertilizer of certain kinds to the soil.

QUESTION: When should the testing be carried out—summer, fall, winter or spring?

ANSWER: It matters very little when soil testing is done. It probably is better to make the soil tests at the end of the season when other work is slacking off somewhat and more time is available. You also will find that state laboratories are able to offer better service to you in the fall because they generally are quite rushed from soil samples from farms just before the spring planting season, when farmers are wondering how much fertilizer to apply to the crops they are about to plant.

QUESTION: How long has soil testing been going on?

ANSWER: Soil testing was conducted as early as 1845 in England by Daubeny. He used carbonic acid as the extracting reagent.