

RESEARCH and YOU

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To turn a phrase, the golf course superintendent has done more to grow grass under his feet than any other individual in the world! Along the way the Green Section, since 1923, has actively pursued and supported turfgrass research matters for the betterment of the nation's golf courses and superintendents. Recent issues of THE USGA GREEN SECTION RECORD have told the great harvest from this research. Now an increased pace is planned by the Green Section for the 1970s.

Productive turfgrass research requires not only intelligence, imagination and talent, but also an understanding of the problems the superintendent faces in the field. If the researcher doesn't know the need, he is not likely to find the answer. Therefore, during the decade ahead, it is the responsibility of us all to determine what new information we need. What new research do we want to have undertaken. Once determined, this must be effectively relayed to the researcher. Here, the Green Section agronomist can play a vital role for all concerned.

Research—real research—is the key to a better life and for us, better golfing turf. But because research has produced so many wonders in the past, one must be alert to the possibility of overuse or abuse of the word. The mere term "research" is not holy. It should not be considered as a sacred cow and go unchallenged.

All too frequently some "research projects" have in reality been simply a demonstration of already known facts or a duplication of effort already competently accomplished, documented and thoroughly investigated. Dr. Elwyn E. Deal, Assistant Director of Extension Service for The University of Maryland, recently wrote in *Park Maintenance* magazine, "Duplication of effort, especially in research, reduces efficiency of the people working in any field." Duplication is not only wasteful of talent, but funds as well.

Research is "laborious, careful inquiry or investigation," (Webster). May we not also expect it to lead to the development of new information? If turfgrass research funds are limited—and they are—should not the effort go toward needed new information rather than continually reconfirming the old?

Like everyone else, the turfgrass researcher has his job responsibilities and his superiors to please. It is an old but true cliché that he must

"publish or perish." Under similar circumstances, we would all find ourselves publishers. It is up to us then—the users of turf culture information—to see that the researcher is aware of our needs and to financially support his investigation of those needs.

In the recent past, the topic of "research needs" came under discussion at several golf course superintendents meetings attended by the author. You may be interested in the replies received:

Irrigation: Better sprinkler heads.
Better sprinkler patterns.
An independent survey of sprinkler equipment.
Establishment of irrigation standards for golf courses.
An accurate, mobile soil moisture sensing device.

New Grasses: Dwarf varieties.
Wear resistance varieties.
Winter and summer hardiness.
Year round color for bermudagrass.

Growth Retardants.
Better *Poa annua* Controls.
Better Algae Control for Ponds.
Labor Efficiency and Management Methods.
Better Equipment and Labor Saving Machines.
An Improved Dye for Winter Bermuda.
Soil Environmental and Micro-Biological Studies.

What would you add to the list? Certainly from the above one can see not all future research needs lie in the field of agronomy or even agriculture. During the 1970s we're going to require assistance from other branches of the university system as well.

Although research has brought us a long way since the 1920s, there's still a long road ahead. Needed now is a coordinated effort between all national turfgrass research interests. With it and the continuing work of outstanding scientists (like the authors of the following two articles), the technology of turfgrass management will enjoy unprecedented progress in the decade ahead. It is progress sorely needed and you and I and all of us have a direct stake in it!