

The Green Section Visiting Service:



Are You Getting Your Money's Worth?

About the only thing one can afford to buy these days—and then not use—is a fire extinguisher! In your home and on the job, 1971 will be a year of cost consciousness. How can an advisory service fit into a program of good turf management and, at the same time, hold the cost line? The answer, it seems, lies largely in the type of advisory service one has in mind. The Green Section Visiting Service, we think, is unique and one that will fit the job.

Tough questions have been posed to us over the years concerning just what the Visiting Service can do for USGA Member Clubs, their Green Committees, and their superintendents. Here are some of the toughest questions. We hope you will find the answers their equal;

Question: (A new Green Committee Chairman is reviewing the budget with the golf course superintendent.) "What's this item, 'Green Section Visiting Service'? Do you really need it?"

Answer: The Chairman's question begs a "no" answer. If the superintendent replies "yes," an inference of incompetence may be drawn.

Actually, no one has a monopoly on knowledge or ideas. The Green Section Service can benefit any club if its experience and ideas are properly used. When teamed with the superintendent, it

can strengthen the hand of the entire turf management program. Furthermore, professionals consult with one another. Indeed, doctors, lawyers, businessmen and even touring golf professionals do it constantly.

A look at the Green Section's list of subscribers will also show that most clubs with the best golf course superintendents are subscribers to the program. Not only have these superintendents encouraged their clubs to subscribe, but they have also actively supported Green Section activities through the years. Rather than a sign of incompetence, subscribing superintendents find the service of positive value! Perhaps the best answer to the original question can be found in a quotation of J.W. Jenks:

"The inlet of a man's mind is what he learns; the outlet is what he accomplishes. If his mind is not fed by a continued supply of ideas which he puts to work with purpose, and if there is no outlet in action, his mind becomes stagnant. Such a mind is a danger to the individual who owns it and is useless to the community."

Question: With so many university specialists available, why should our club subscribe to the Green Section program?

Answer: Not only are state university specialists available, but many commercial consultants also offer a turf advisory service. In addition, turf product salesmen make frequent calls and keep customers up to date on new products. This is all to the good. Indeed, the more factual information one has, the better he will perform.

Good advice, someone once said, is only as good as its source. And, "the source" is only as good as its background, experience, and actual performance. The USGA Green Section is the *only agency in the country* devoted solely to golf course turf, its playing conditions and its management. It has nothing to sell. Each Green Section agronomist averages over 150 on-the-spot golf course visits a year. The total service offered to a subscribing club cannot be matched by any individual or agency.

Question: "Isn't \$300 (for an 18- to 27-hole course) a lot of money for just one course visit a year?"

Answer: In many instances one bit of Green Section advice has saved a club many times the cost of the service. In relation to the entire maintenance budget, the Green Section Visiting Service charge is unbelievably low; less than 1/3 of 1% of most golf course maintenance budgets today. And actually, the \$300 covers more than just one visit a year:

- 1) A second visit is made at the request of the club and at no additional cost.
- 2) Each visit is followed by a written report; a permanent record of problems and progress.
- 3) All expenses (salaries, travel, office, etc.) are covered by the original fee.
- 4) The USGA places part of its annual membership income in support of turfgrass research projects throughout the country.
- 5) By maintaining regional offices, Green Section agronomists are able to attend and participate in regional turf conferences and local superintendent meetings. They are able to keep up with the problems of their region first hand.

The Green Section service, like all USGA activities, is a non-profit enterprise. By utilizing the services, any club can improve its golf course and its playing conditions. Its only mission is to serve the best interests of golf. The \$300 fee is established to cover costs only.

Question: Will the Visiting Service save our club money?

Answer: Almost anyone can study a golf course maintenance budget and soon find ways of cutting costs and saving money. The real trick is to save money without impairing the long-range quality or condition of the golf course; i.e., to spend wisely what is available. Our knowledge of golf course budgets leads to the belief that considerable sums are frequently wasted. The waste comes in a variety of forms:

- 1) Membership whims and requests that add little to long-range improvements but much to the budget.
- 2) Unnecessary equipment purchases.
- 3) NOT purchasing *needed* equipment and labor-saving items.
- 4) Purchasing high cost supplies and materials because some outside agency promises *better growth, less water use, released locked soil nutrients, eliminate tile and drainage needs, reduced labor requirements* (but doesn't get the job done), *will eliminate compaction*, etc.

The Green Section's purpose is not to tell anyone what to buy, but to point out what grass plant requirements are, how these requirements might best be met, and what other golf courses have found to be beneficial and good. The service is concerned with efficiency of operation, in developing and maintaining high golf course standards and quality turf. Wastefulness has no place in golf course operations, neither does indiscriminate cost cutting. Emphasis must be on getting the most for your money; better golfing turf for your course. Emphasis must be with *how good* rather than *how cheap*.

Since 1923, over \$3 million has been spent on Green Section activities. A vast storehouse of knowledge and experience has been accumulated. This is your storehouse, and it is available to all USGA Member Clubs interested in maintaining the best possible golfing turf for their membership. The Green Section Visiting Service offers a balanced program of on-the-spot visits followed by a detailed report from conveniently located Regional Offices. In addition, substantial support is given to turfgrass research projects at universities and research stations throughout the country. In 1970, \$32,000 was spent to support this work.

Are your maintenance practices up to date? Day after day; year after year the USGA Green Section has helped advance the cause of quality turf for golf. If your club is not now a Green Section subscriber, write for further information to Golf House, 40 East 38th Street, New York, New York 10016. See for yourself how we may be of service in 1971.