

Turfgrasses for Golf and How They Affect You - The Golfer

1978 GREEN SECTION EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Dr. Jesse A. DeFrance, 18th Recipient of USGA Green Section Award

DR. JESSE A. DeFRANCE, of Sarasota, Florida, became the 18th recipient of the annual USGA Green Section Award for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass. The Award was presented to Dr. DeFrance by Harry W. Easterly, Jr., of Richmond, Virginia, who was then President of the USGA, and Will F. Nicholson, Jr., of Denver, Colorado, Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee. The ceremony took place during the 22nd Annual Green Section Conference on Golf Course Management, which was held in San Francisco on January 27.

The entire 15-member USGA Executive Committee attended the presentation ceremony, and Mr. Easterly introduced them all.

As he accepted the Award, Dr. DeFrance recalled his early days of education at Colorado State University, where he played golf on sand greens at the Fort Collins Country Club! He then told of his first meeting with Dr. John Monteith, Jr., at the Green Section's Arlington Turf Gardens; his stopping by to see the late Joe Valentine, Superintendent at the Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Valentine showed him the beautiful patch of bluegrass which later became known as Merion bluegrass; his trip abroad in 1937 to attend the Grassland Conference with Dr. Monteith and Dr. Fred Grau, where they met Dr. Dawson, head of the Research Station sponsored by the British golf clubs.

Dr. DeFrance was born in Golden, Colorado, and received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees from Colorado State College. He earned his Doctorate from Cornell in 1932 where his thesis was on plant materials. Dr. DeFrance was a botany instructor of Colorado State College in 1925-26 and an instructor in horticulture at Cornell from 1926 to 1935. He served one year, 1935-36, as an associate agrono-

mist with the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dr. DeFrance went to the University of Rhode Island as Associate Research Professor of Agronomy and Landscape Gardening in September of 1936. He held the position of head of the turf department when he retired in 1960. Dr. DeFrance has written scores of bulletins and articles on turf problems. Some of his ideas were controversial, especially his advocacy of close mowing. He recommended a one-inch height of cut year around. He maintained that close, frequent and regular mowing helped force lateral growth and improved the density of turfgrasses — and some of the dissidents finally agreed with him.

Important contributions:

1. The development of high nitrogen descending fertilizer ratios for turf areas.
2. The cyanamid method of soil sterilization for weed-free seedbeds and for weed-free composts.
3. Proved that phenyl mercury acetate was effective in the control of crabgrass.
4. Developed seed mixtures, such as Kingston mixture and URI No. 1 and No. 2 lawn seed mixtures.
5. In 1934 he wrote his first bulletin on "Lawns — Their Construction and Maintenance."
6. In 1935 he wrote the article on "Lawns" in the revised edition of Liberty Hyde Bailey's "Hortus."

Dr. DeFrance was a true pioneer in the development of fine turf as we know it today, and he is a most worthy recipient of this coveted Award.