

## Dear Bill Letter V

RICHLAND CENTER, N. Y., September 1, 1921.

DEAR BILL:

You certainly are in the adolescent stage of development—"addled state" would be better, because you've listened to every one who would talk to you, from the expert down. Just now you'd function quite as well if the top of your head was cut off and the contents were replaced with rice-pudding or cornbeef-hash.

You'll learn a lot quicker, Bill, if you keep on asking questions and listening to every one who will talk. But don't try all the stuff. Don't start in experimenting with this, that, or the other thing that some plausible talker says beats the world.

When you are thoroughly convinced that some scheme, system, or treatment is just the thing, go out and take a look at nature, if you can find her untampered with in your neighborhood, and then contemplate how the Lord produces really commendable results by a treatment that is simplicity itself. Listen, Bill—stop, look, and listen, if you will; but give nature a chance. The more you listen the less you'll experiment. And beware of systems. The man with a "system" of constructing putting-greens is full-blooded brother of the chap who has a system of playing roulette—they are out of the same litter. You'll go broke if you follow either. The really wonderful thing about nature is the amount of abuse it will stand and still survive. But where it is tackled with a "system" there is more than half a chance it will give up in disgust.

There's just one "system" you can safely adopt, and that is a system of asking questions. Ask them in every way and form you can think of, and don't be afraid or ashamed to ask them. The less you appear to know the more information you'll get. The system lies in asking the same question twice or three times to see if you get the same answer. It's a great system, Bill, and it has exploded many and many experts. Try it out. Ask the next expert that comes along a question about something or other, and after an hour or so ask the same thing perhaps in a little different way, and if you get the same answer give the expert one credit mark; but always keep a dozen or so questions going at the same time.

There's another thing to remember, Bill, and that is, "seeing is believing." When the expert has passed all the preliminary tests and has your committee about convinced that he should be employed and his system is the best and his goods are the only simon-pure articles to be had, instead of signing just above his thumb arrange to see some of the work he has done, and talk—don't write—to the people he has done. When he claims credit for making or putting some course in condition, find out if the men on that course are still buying stuff of the expert, and if not, why not. If your program calls for the expenditure of five, ten, or fifteen thousand dollars, you can well afford to spend a couple of hundred just looking and asking more questions.

There's just one more thing, Bill. When the expert begins to knock you may know there's something wrong. He may be getting his gas all right, but you'll find a pin or bearing loose somewhere; and when he starts claiming that scientists are all right in their way but they are not to be compared with practical men like himself, give him the air and step on it hard. When he claims credit for results that you can easily find out were largely due to the Lord and when he charges others with causing results

that were attributable to some incurable blight, reach for the bung-starter and ring for the bouncer.

Just one thing more, Bill. Before you swallow the whole dose the expert prescribed get him to give you his history, and check him up, and if he claims credit for "making" this or that course, or if he says he worked under or with this or that man, you'll probably find his recollection is a trifle too enthusiastic in his own favor.

Guess I'd talk all night about "expets" if I could get anyone to listen to me, because I know the breed. Go ahead, Bill, and fall for them if you feel you'll never be satisfied otherwise; but sure as you do you'll come back wearing crepe and your pockets will be empty.

Yours, CHAUNCEY.

## Goose-Grass (*Eleusine indica* Gaertn)

C. V. PIPER AND R. A. OAKLEY

The grass illustrated is a common summer weed particularly in door-yards, along roadsides, in waste places, but also rather troublesome in lawns and on putting-greens. It is often called yard-grass; not infrequently wire-grass and crab-grass, though these two names really belong to other grasses. About Washington the greenkeepers call it silver crab-grass, on account of the shining white color of the ensheathed stems of the young plants as they appear in putting greens, a characteristic that clearly marks the grass. The roots are much tougher than those of the true crab-grasses, as a weeder quickly discovers.

Goose grass is now generally distributed in the United States. It was long ago introduced from India, its native home. A very similar grass called ragi is cultivated in India for grain, and it is the general belief of botanists that ragi has been developed by cultivating from the wild goose-grass.

The peculiar shape of the flower-cluster readily distinguishes goose-grass when in bloom; young plants on the putting-green are marked by the silver stems and the tough roots.

