

Low Fertilizing Value of Peat

That peat has a low fertilizing value is the opinion of the United States Department of Agriculture Fertilizer Council, which has been studying the problem as a result of many inquiries. During the past few years peat has frequently been advertised for sale as "humus," to be used as fertilizer or in place of fertilizer or manure. It has been alleged that special processes, such as "bacterization," occasionally give it unusual power to improve soil conditions and plant growth. The department council finds that peat, as well as muck and similar materials, whether bacterized or not, are distinctly inferior to stable manure or mineral fertilizers for increasing crop production. Although it is too bulky and too poor in available plant food to serve as substitutes for these materials, certain kinds of peat appear to be suitable in the growing of specialties or as a potting soil in greenhouse forcing. In the manufacture of mixed fertilizers the use of peat as a conditioner, as well as a filler, appears to have been satisfactory to the mixer.

According to the statement made by the department council, a well-decomposed layer of peat contains little plant food of any kind. The rather high percentage of nitrogen occasionally found in peat or muck is due not to the presence of available nitrogen, but to the slow accumulations of nitrogenous material of an extremely inert character, the more soluble substances having been lost. Peat deposits represent slow accumulations of layers of plant material of different kinds, and show great variation in texture and quality. Many peat deposits are agriculturally unsatisfactory and some peat contains substances which actually injure plants. However, considerable areas of peat and muck soils are under cultivation and these frequently show high productivity for many kinds of truck crops or as grass land.

The claims of unusual value for bacterized peat appear to be based more or less directly on statements made a few years ago by Professor Bottemley, of England. Further experiments in this country and abroad have failed to support this theory and no laboratory process for the "bacterization" of peat which improves its fertilizer value has been discovered.

A Few Kind Words; or What Keeps the Green Committee On the Job

"We joined the Green Section of the U. S. Golf Association and desire here to say that we are deeply indebted to this wonderful organization for the invaluable aid and advice they gave us during the time that our course was being constructed. Time and time again questions arose relative to many of the details connected with the work on our course with regard to which we found it necessary to obtain not only the advice of our architect and our professional but also of other experts; and the Green Section always came to the front, without charge to us other than the small membership dues we pay annually, and gave us the benefit of all they had learned from many years of experience with golf courses."—*Mr. Benjamin C. Ribman, President, Fresh Meadow Country Club, Flushing, Long Island.*

"You are to be congratulated on this move. Our public course, in common with others, strives to give facilities to players at the lowest cost possible. Assistance from an agency whose sole interest is to accumulate and disperse intelligent information for the sake of golf itself will result in fewer errors and