

The Annual Greenkeepers' Convention

Where shall it be held? May we have an expression of opinion from you?

At the annual meeting of the United States Golf Association Green Section held in New York City on January 7 and 8, 1928, Mr. H. K. Read, of the Country Club of Atlantic City, very kindly extended an invitation from his club to the greenkeepers to hold the annual meeting there this year. The generosity of Mr. Read and his club in offering such excellent facilities for the meeting is greatly appreciated. It was the thought of the Executive Committee that the greenkeepers would prefer to have the meeting at some other point than Washington, where it was held last year. The Committee furthermore felt that, in view of Mr. Read's interest in turf grass investigations, the Country Club of Atlantic City would have much of interest to show greenkeepers along this line. Moreover, a meeting at that point offers an opportunity for visiting the well-known Pine Valley course. Since that time we have received a communication from one of the greenkeepers' associations urging that the meeting be held in Washington again this year rather than at any other place, and that two or three days be devoted to the meeting. As this convention is designed primarily for the benefit of the greenkeepers it is the desire of the Executive Committee to comply with the wishes of the majority as to whether the meeting shall be held in Washington or in Atlantic City. We want therefore to urge all greenkeepers, either individually or through their associations, to write us at an early date of their preference as regards the place of holding the meeting and the time to be devoted to it. Furthermore, any suggestions as regards the program would be very acceptable.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

All questions sent to the Green Section will be answered in a letter to the writer as promptly as possible. The more interesting of these questions, with concise answers, will appear in this column each month. If your experience leads you to disagree with any answer given in this column, it is your privilege and duty to write to the Green Section.

While most of the answers are of general application, please bear in mind that each recommendation is intended specifically for the locality designated at the end of the question.

1. Kind of sand to use in traps.—We are ready to put sand in the traps on our new course and have ordinary building sand close to us. Some suggest mixing small pebbles the size of a coffee bean with this. What sort of sand should we use? (Indiana.)

ANSWER.—In choosing sand for traps the chief requirement is a clean sand—one that is as free as possible from clay, silt, or humus. It should not be so fine that it will blow about readily or tend to become smooth and compact, thereby largely nullifying the handicap that is supposed to exist where a player gets in a trap. Ordinary building sand is frequently used, although some clubs prefer a finer material provided it can be obtained white and clean. Some clubs that can afford it, go to the expense of procuring white beach sand, which is likely to be a little fine in texture although it is the color usually desired. It sets off the greens and bunkers very

clearly and gives a pleasant effect to the landscape. Under your conditions we would advise the use of the local builders sand if you can have it sifted so as to remove the small pebbles. Nothing is gained by having pebbles in the sand; in fact, they are a nuisance, as they often are thrown out on the green. After the traps are filled with the local sand you could from time to time add white sand to set them off.

2. Clover on fairways; value of pigeon manure.—The soil on our fairways is very acid and still clover seems to come in strong; also on the knolls where the soil is thin and stony there is some green moss coming in. Had we better use horse manure, or would you recommend some other fertilizer that is better suited to our soil? We could get pigeon manure locally at \$20 per ton. (Connecticut.)

ANSWER.—For thin, stony places on your fairways we know of nothing better than a topdressing of good soil mixed with horse manure, as suggested in your letter. When clover occurs in putting greens it is usually possible to reduce the growth of the clover to a considerable extent by fertilizing frequently and rather heavily with ammonium sulfate. Such treatment, however, is hardly practicable on fairways. In fact, where clover is abundant on fairways there is no practical treatment for its elimination. For general fairway fertilization some such material as cottonseed meal, Milorganite, or pulverized poultry manure gives very good results. Whichever of these materials is used should be applied at the rate of from 400 to 600 pounds per acre, depending upon the condition of the turf. Pigeon manure as a fertilizer for fairways is in about the same class as poultry manure. If a good quality can be purchased at \$20 per ton it would be practicable to use it. The rate of application ordinarily should range from 400 to 600 pounds per acre, depending somewhat upon the quality of the pigeon manure.

3. Comparative value of mowrah meal and corrosive sublimate for worming greens.—If pure mowrah meal, unadulterated, packed in original export bags can be secured at a price ranging from \$40 to \$50 per ton, f. o. b., Baltimore, is it your opinion that the average golf course can secure equally good results by using this material instead of corrosive sublimate at the present market price, which we understand is around \$1.40 per pound? Is it not true that mowrah meal can be safely handled and applied by any greenkeeper, whereas, corrosive sublimate is a deadly poison and must be handled with care? As mowrah meal contains from 4 to 6 per cent ammonia and approximately 1 per cent, each, phosphoric acid and potash, can it not be considered a complete fertilizer, whereas corrosive sublimate is merely a poison? (Maryland.)

ANSWER.—Our experience has shown mowrah meal to be an effective earthworm eradicator, provided it has not lost its original active properties or has not been adulterated. It is not, however, quite as effective as corrosive sublimate. One objection to the use of mowrah meal has been the cost, but with mowrah meal selling at \$40 to \$50 per ton and corrosive sublimate at \$1.40 per pound the difference in cost would not amount to much applied at the rates usually recommended. It is true that mowrah meal may be handled with perfect safety while corrosive sublimate is a deadly poison. Of course, corrosive sublimate has been used so much in recent years in brown-patch control that the danger from its use is pretty well

known and generally guarded against. Corrosive sublimate also has a tendency to burn the grass if not properly applied, while mowrah meal shows no injurious effect when applied at the rate of 15 pounds per 1,000 square feet, which is the usual recommendation. It is also true that mowrah meal contains the three plant food elements (nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash) that are essential to what is generally recognized as a complete fertilizer. The percentages of these elements are low, and no one would be justified in paying \$40 or \$50 a ton for mowrah meal based on its fertilizing value alone. For your further information we are quoting passages from the May, 1924, BULLETIN of the Green Section as follows:

"From the standpoint of economy and efficiency, corrosive sublimate is without question the best substance to use to rid turf of earthworms. It is exceedingly efficient if properly used. But here lies the difficulty. It is quite apparent that, notwithstanding all that has been written and said with regard to the use of corrosive sublimate as an earthworm eradicator, there are many who have injured their turf by applying it improperly. . . . Corrosive sublimate is a violent poison and due care must be exercised in its use. . . . Mowrah meal is a very effective earthworm eradicator provided it has not lost its original active properties by improper storage or has not been adulterated. Furthermore, it possesses some fertilizer value, although not much when applied at the rate recommended for earthworm eradication. Burning of the grass may occur with heavy applications of mowrah meal, but not the slightest trace of burning has been noted from an application of 15 pounds to 1,000 square feet. Mowrah meal deteriorates with age, especially if stored in a damp place. It is also subject to adulteration with sand or similar inert matter. These facts should be borne in mind by the purchaser. . . . Until something better has developed, it is urged that corrosive sublimate or mowrah meal be used as here suggested. The careful and systematic use of either will give highly satisfactory results and will have a tendency permanently to lessen the earthworm problem."

4. Hastening recovery of grass on divots by fertilization and marking spots so treated.—Most of the divots made by players here take mainly grass or grass roots and practically no soil, so that replacing these divots has very little effect, as they do not take root, but wither. It occurred to us that probably the divot holes could be more quickly covered if they were treated with fertilizer shortly after being made. In order that it may be known what divot had been fertilized, it would seem advisable to include in the fertilizer some coloring matter so that the divot hole would not be continuously treated. We had in mind the use of cottonseed meal, nitrate of soda, and probably some filler, and would appreciate your opinion on this method and any suggestion that you might make, both as to the fertilizing material and the coloring matter to be used. (Louisiana.)

ANSWER.—What you say about divots is often true, particularly in the case of rather tough turf grasses, such as Bermuda and carpet grass. Frequently the iron club cuts the grass at the surface of the ground, no soil being taken with it. When the divot is replaced the grass is not likely to take root unless moisture conditions are favorable for some time. We believe that your suggestion to encourage the grass to cover such spots by fertilizing liberally is a good one. As a fertilizer we have had excellent results from a mixture composed of one part ammonium sulfate and three parts of cottonseed meal. We prefer the ammonium sulfate to nitrate of soda for this purpose, although the latter also gives good results. The usual rate of application of the mixture is from 400 to 600 pounds per acre. Of course, to apply the fertilizer to so small an area it would be necessary to use a considerable quantity of filler. If you can procure white sand you might mix it with the fertilizer in the proportion of 25 parts of sand to one part of the mixed fertilizer previously recommended. A good handful of the mixture should supply sufficient fertilizer for an area six inches square, at the rate recommended. We believe the white sand would serve to identify the places treated better than any colored material.

AS WE FIND THEM

A few greenkeepers decided to visit courses in their neighborhood to become acquainted and swap ideas. Stopping at one club they told the greenkeeper their purpose and were greeted thus:

"What's the big idea? Do you think I am going to let you fellows spy around here and pick up all my secrets? Guess again! Here's one greenkeeper who knows enough to keep the tricks of his trade from general circulation."

Needless to say, that man's closely guarded and fondly cherished "secrets" were an heritage from golf's "cow-pasture era." What he knows about modern greenkeeping is enough to make even earthworms laugh.

As one of the visiting greenkeepers expressed it, "How convenient it is for some men, be they greenkeepers or what not, to be able to tell everything they know about a subject simply by remaining silent."

Contrasted with this stay-at-home type we can but be reminded of the other extreme, found unfortunately in every locality where greenkeepers gather. He is that conspicuous fellow who evidently feels his chief mission in life is to be on hand at all times ready to pop up during every discussion to proclaim to the world, "That's all bunk!"

He always reminds us of the rear rank infantryman who persists in arguing "I am the only man in the company who is in step."

Both of these types are becoming more and more scarce; thanks largely to the efforts of greenkeepers themselves in obtaining information and discussing problems with open minds. In spite of limitations of the few, we have a host of first class greenkeepers in this country and their organizations can accomplish wonders for the betterment of golf courses.

Let us hope that in their discussions they continue conscious of the fact that the closed mind with an unswerving attitude of "My principles are all right, the rest of you are all wrong" will sooner or later wreck any organization whether it be in religion, world politics or greenkeeping.

Overheard this at one of the national meetings—After listening to a group of greenkeepers argue about the relative merits of brown-patch remedies, one who hailed from the North beyond the brown-patch area burst out with this illuminating information: "No, sir, I don't know what those diseases are. The reason is I don't get scared and don't dose my greens with a lot of medicine. You fellows just imagine those diseases and then weaken your grass with that fool dope."

One old-timer from a region where brown-patch is far from imaginary pounced on him with this one: "If you don't know our difficulties why be so quick to pass judgment on our methods in handling them? You sound like a South Sea islander telling a bunch of Eskimos, 'No, sir; I don't know what cold is. The reason is I don't get scared and don't smother myself with thick furs. You fellows just imagine that cold and then weaken yourselves with those fool wraps!'"