

## OUR LETTER BOX

The Green Section receives numerous inquiries concerning local turf problems and is always glad to reply to them. With the hope that some of these questions and answers may be helpful to others besides the original correspondent, a few of them will be published. While most of the answers will have a general application, it should be remembered that each recommendation is intended for the locality designated at the end of the question.

**Green bugs on Kentucky bluegrass.**—Under separate cover I am sending a sample of Kentucky bluegrass collected late in December. I will appreciate your identifying the insects that have been depositing their eggs on the grass blades. Many of the eggs hatched within 3 days after the sample was taken. The blades bearing egg deposits eventually die. (West Virginia.)

**ANSWER.**—An examination of these specimens revealed the fact that the bluegrass was attacked by the "green bug" *Toxoptera graminum* Rond. The "eggs" to which you referred are the dried and swollen bodies of the aphids in which had developed the little winged parasite, *Aphidius testaceipes* Cress. These had hatched out into the box after the sample had been collected. This parasite is useful in controlling the green bug.

The females of the green bug are capable of reproducing at tempera-

tures as low as 45° F. or lower and it is not unusual for them to spend the winter in the crowns of plants or in bluegrass even in Washington, so that their presence at Huntington, West Virginia, is not at all remarkable. The rusty red condition of the blades of grass was caused by the feeding of the green bug. In fact, the presence of the insect is often indicated by clumps of discolored blades such as those enclosed with the specimens.

\* \* \*

**Fertilizer for bluegrass.**—Our turf is composed chiefly of bluegrass with a little fescue and a little clover. The soil is a clay subsoil with a clay loam surface of about 2 or 3 inches. We would appreciate your advice as to the proper fertilizer to apply. (Illinois.)

**ANSWER.**—Since your turf consists chiefly of bluegrass with not much clover and fescue, it is probable that you will obtain best results

by applying some fertilizer high in nitrogen and with perhaps half as much phosphoric acid. A mixed fertilizer such as a 10-5-2, 8-4-2 or a similar combination should give you entirely satisfactory results. It would be well to apply such a fertilizer as early in the spring as possible. If you have crabgrass do not apply fertilizer after the end of April. In case fertilizer cannot be applied in early spring, wait until early fall.

\* \* \*

Is dollarspot caused by "fuzz" from poplar trees?—During the past few years we have had in July a condition on our greens similar to dollarspot. There are poplar trees in the near vicinity of the affected greens and the greenkeeper maintains that the symptoms on the grass come from the fuzz which is blown off the poplar trees. No other greens of ours are thus affected. Have you ever heard of a similar condition? In your opinion, are the symptoms on the grass caused by the poplar "fuzz"? (Connecticut.)

ANSWER.—The symptoms which you mention were probably those of dollarspot. Dollarspot is caused by a fungus which appears on the grass as a fuzzy growth of mold in the early morning before the sun dries it out. The "fuzz" from the

cottonwood or poplar trees is sometimes confused by greenkeepers with the moldy growth that produces dollarspot. Actually, however, there is no connection whatever between the two, nor is there any evidence that this deposit from the poplar trees causes any harm to the grass. We think you will find it is just a coincidence that the dollarspot occurs in the areas near the poplar trees.

\* \* \*

Italian rye grass on Bermuda greens.—Our Bermuda greens are not doing so well this year. It occurs to me that it would be better not to sow the Italian rye on these greens but give the soil the winter rest and not have the Italian rye shading the Bermuda grass from the sun in the spring. I will appreciate your advice on the use of Italian rye grass on Bermuda greens. (Tennessee.)

ANSWER.—It is a common practice through the South to plant Bermuda grass greens to ryegrass in the fall to give a green covering for winter play. This growth of ryegrass tends to slow down the growth of Bermuda grass in the spring but after a short time it seems to grow as well as if it had not been seeded to ryegrass.

One of the common practices is to let the greens become dry in the

spring before Bermuda grass starts to grow. Drying of the greens tends to check the growth of ryegrass and much of it will die. After competition is removed in this way the Bermuda grass should be heavily fertilized to stimulate as rapid a growth as possible in order to cover up the bare spots.

\* \* \*

**Will turf grasses survive flooding with salt water?**—Some of our turf was under sea water for several hours and has turned completely brown. We have had the turf spiked but have not been able to water due to the fact that the sea water entered our water supply. After several tests the water is still adjudged salty. We would like to know if in your opinion the turf will be permanently damaged or if we may expect it to survive. What treatment do you recommend our using to re-establish our turf? (Massachusetts.)

**ANSWER.**—Ordinarily creeping bent is able to withstand a considerable amount of salt water. If your turf contains a good proportion of creeping bent no doubt most of it will survive. However, the colonial and velvet bents, as well as *Poa annua*, are more apt to be severely damaged than the creeping bent. If your turf is composed chiefly of

these grasses the chances are you will find much of it will not survive.

We note that your water supply is still salty and therefore you have been unable to water frequently. This is unfortunate since the best treatment no doubt would be to water frequently with fresh water so as to reduce the concentration of the salt. As soon as you can obtain fresh water it would be well to keep the turf watered thoroughly to try to leach out the salt as rapidly as possible. If it is impossible to get a supply of fresh water it would be well to topdress with a light top-dressing. This would reduce the evaporation and consequently slow down the process of salt concentration on the surface of the turf.

If the grass does not recover sufficiently by spring we advise liberally seeding with colonial bent as early as possible.

\* \* \*

***Poa serotina* not a lawn grass.**—Is *Poa serotina* adaptable in this country for lawn or pasture purposes? (Maryland.)

**ANSWER.**—*Poa serotina* is a good pasture or hay grass for wet or swampy ground. It will not do for a lawn since it does not make a close turf.

