

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.

Control of Pearlwort.—A friend of mine who has a private golf course is getting such an unusually heavy growth of pearlwort in his greens that it is almost impossible, or from the standpoint of expense, impractical to cut out the spots as they appear. The subsoil of all of these greens is almost entirely sand. The only loam is that which he adds in top dressing each year. If there are certain fundamental conditions which usually exist when pearlwort is prevalent and an effective treatment of which you know, I shall be grateful for your sending this information to me. (Massachusetts.)

ANSWER.—Ordinarily pearlwort is most troublesome under conditions of poor drainage, hard surface or starved soil. The possibility of poor drainage is eliminated since the soil is sandy. It is therefore possible that the soil may be too hard or that the grass may not be fed sufficiently with nitrogen. It may be that your friend

is rolling his greens too heavily, in which case we would suggest that this procedure be abandoned, and that the greens be spiked to loosen the surface soil to some extent. It would also be well to apply fertilizer, such as sulfate of ammonia, freely until the grass is well established.

If pearlwort still persists he might try our new chemical treatments, as described in *TURF CULTURE* for January, 1939. These have given, on several occasions, very satisfactory control of pearlwort.

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Reseeding the lawn.—What grass can I seed in spring on a lawn that had a good cover of crabgrass in 1940? (Maryland.)

ANSWER.—Where crabgrass has been abundant there is little use in seeding a permanent lawn grass in spring. The crabgrass will smother the Kentucky bluegrass during the summer. Better wait until fall to reseed. Meanwhile, Italian ryegrass

can be seeded to make the lawn look green until the crabgrass starts growth. Sow about 5 to 15 pounds to 1,000 square feet.

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Weed control with arsenicals.—

Can you give me information as to what chemicals to use for the treatment of chickweed and other weed growths, what quantities to apply and whether to spray or apply it in sand? (New York.)

ANSWER. — Our recommendation is to use sodium arsenite at the rate of 4 ounces to 1,000 square feet when applying it with a spray, and $\frac{3}{4}$ pound when applying it in sand. Either method will work. For a large area the spray treatment is by far the most economical. On small areas, however, the sand treatment can be used satisfactorily.

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Scale of Bermuda Grass.—I am enclosing some Bermuda grass taken from our fairways. As you will notice there is a scale working on this grass at the joints. In time the grass dies back completely. The scale is most active in the fall and spring and I fear that, if not checked very soon we are not going to have any grass on our fairways. How can we most effectively control this pest? (Florida.)

ANSWER.—The name of your scale is *Odouaspis ruthae*. It is a difficult insect to handle since it has a protective covering on both sides. The most effective and cheapest spray is Kerosene emulsion but this is ordinarily impractical for fairway use.

Sometimes scale insects become troublesome on plants that are starved but are harmless when the plants are well fertilized. We suggest that you make certain that lack of fertilizer, particularly potash, is not the cause of your trouble. We generally recommend for golf turf a fertilizer containing a high percentage of nitrogen and less phosphorus and potash but in certain sandy soils potash is more essential.

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the first preparation of superphosphate by treating rock phosphate with sulfuric acid. It was in 1842 that John Benet Lawes of Rothamsted (an experimental station about 20 miles north of London which was an estate at that time) invented and patented this method of manufacturing superphosphate after several years of experimenting with various possible means of improving soil for plant growth. This was the first case of manufacturing a mineral salt for plant food and therefore marked the beginning of the fertilizer industry.