

1975 GREEN SECTION EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Economy Measures for Survival

Dr. Fanny-Fern Davis 15th Recipient of USGA Green Section Award

Dr. Fanny-Fern Davis of Valparaiso, Fla. accepted the 1975 USGA Green Section Award on January 24 at the Association's Annual Conference on Golf Course Management. The presentation was made by Harton S. Semple of Sewickley, Pa., President of the USGA, and Elbert S. Jemison, Jr., of Birmingham, Ala., Chairman of the Green Section Committee, in New York City.

The delightful Dr. Davis is the first woman to receive the Green Section Award, given in recognition of distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass. She was accompanied to the presentation by her daughter and husband. The audience of over 500 gave her a standing ovation. Her work in the control of broadleaf weeds ushered in an entirely new era in golf course maintenance.

From 1943 through 1945, Dr. Davis was Acting Director of the USGA Green Section and at the time conducted experiments with the then new plant hormone regulators. Her work with turfgrass was certainly significant. The chemical 2,4-D (2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) became widely used for control of dandelion, plantain, chickweed, dock, buckhorn and other weeds. Indeed, golf course maintenance has never been the same.

Dr. Davis recalled those early days of 2,4-D research. Huge outdoor bonfires had to be built under oil drums in order to melt the wax in which 2,4-D was then dissolved. The first experiments to kill broadleaf weeds with it in grass were conducted on the fairways and tees at Chevy Chase Club in Washington, D.C. The work grew and additional testing was carried out by experiment stations throughout the



Dr. Fanny-Fern Davis with her daughter, Mrs. R.B. MacWhortor, and husband, Dr. Everett Davis.

country. Dr. Davis paid particular tribute to the research stations at Penn State, New Jersey, and Rhode Island. She recalled fondly her association with Fred H. Williams, Drs. John Monteith, Jr., and Fred V. Grau of earlier Green Section days, and Herb and Joe Graffis of *Golfdom* magazine.

At the close of World War II, Dr. Davis returned to her work with The National Capital Parks Service, part of the Department of Interior. Her research with 2,4-D continued and her findings are published in the paper, "Turf Weed Control With 2,4-D."

Dr. Davis is now 72 and Chairman Emeritus in biology at Okaloosa-Walton Junior College in Florida. Her enthusiasm knows no bounds. She is active in serving senior citizens and addressing herself to their problems. Through lectures, writings and television, Dr. Fanny-Fern Davis continues to make her contribution to the broad spectrum of life. She closed her comments by reminding her "young audience" that "each day we grow older and each of us should start planning now for our later years."