

# BE PREPARED

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**N**EW ideas are essential to progress and in golf course maintenance there is no lack in this direction. It is, however, true to say that some of the old ideas continue to be basically good greenkeeping but tend to be forgotten in the rush of modern times. In this category comes "spare turf" to quote our grandfathers or as we prefer to say today the provision of a turf nursery

If first-class conditions are to be maintained particularly on greens and tees then a supply of good quality turf is essential for carrying out urgent repairs. Unfortunately the provision of a turf nursery is often discussed at all levels and in sincerity but no action is ever taken until turf is urgently needed when it is too late to do anything about it.

## Accidents

Admittedly large scale annual renovation by turfing is seldom necessary on the actual greens but there is often need for repairs to odd damaged areas. Such damage might result from accidental scorch by chemicals, an attack of disease, extreme climatic conditions or vandalism which is quite frequent these days in many areas. Concentrated wear by foot traffic and caddy carts on restricted surrounds may also create a need for new turf in order to remove an eyesore and/or maintain fair playing conditions in close proximity to the green.

If good turf is available the aforementioned problems can be quickly dealt with and it is also possible to remove such blemishes as Yorkshire fog patches which may spoil the appearance and uniformity of the putting surface. It also means that weeds which have great resistance to selective weed-killer such as the Speedwells can be completely removed before they spread and the surface immediately restored by patching.

With the current emphasis on additional length and in some cases loss of land due to other development including road works, many golf clubs are concerned in making alterations to existing layouts. These often involve the construction of a new green or greens as quickly as possible whilst maintaining the existing course in full play. In such situations a supply of good turf is an obvious requirement. The need for prepared turf does therefore really always exist and the golf course is incomplete without a prepared turf nursery.

## Prime Need

For routine needs a nursery in the region of 400 to 600 sq yds. is generally adequate but a larger area should be the aim where some major reconstruction scheme is envisaged. Suitable turf can in some instances be obtained by working down an area of fairway away from the main line of play where the sward is predominantly bent, fescue or a mixture of these grasses. General maintenance on the same lines as practised on the greens for a couple of seasons or so would in these circumstances produce a satisfactory material for most renovation work. Although turf suitable for renovation on tees if not greens can be cultivated on most of our courses it is true to say that for use on greens the turf nursery is generally best produced from seed.

## Close at Hand

For the production of such a nursery choose a site where it will be possible to provide adequate attention. In the past many turf nurseries have been started in remote corners and because of this they have been neglected or completely forgotten. Ideally, the site should also be near a water point so that moisture can be readily provided as and when necessary

A depth of 6 in. of top soil is desirable on the nursery and it should preferably be a light or medium loam and must be thoroughly cultivated. The texture of heavier soils can be improved by adding sand and peat, etc. Materials of this nature should be evenly spread over the surface and well worked into the existing soil. If the soil is over-acid, liming will be necessary and this should also be worked into the surface soil during final cultivations while invariably a pre-seeding fertilizer will be needed. Actual soil requirements should, however, be determined by tests on representative soil samples from the areas concerned—a service available at the Institute to all greenkeepers of affiliated golf clubs.

### Getting Ready

Initial preparation could start now with further frequent surface cultivations being carried out throughout the growing season with the object of removing undesirable grasses and weeds as they appear. Later on in the summer a fine, evenly firmed and smooth seed bed should be prepared for the late summer sowing. Preparation of this nature is best done by alternate heeling and raking. Any recommended fertilizer should be applied and raked into the prepared seed bed some 7-10 days before sowing takes place using a seeds mixture comprising

- 8 parts American Chewings' fescue (Grade 1)
- 2 parts American browntop bent (Grade 1)

A sowing rate of 1 oz. per sq. yd. should produce a turf of good texture for golf greens providing the seed bed has been properly prepared.

During the early days of establishment it is important that the nursery be watered when necessary and careful hand weeding will be required to remove all undesirable weed grasses and perennial weeds as they appear. Initially topping only should be done but as the new grass thickens up the height of cut can be gradually reduced to  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. at which height the nursery should be maintained until the following season. From then onwards further gradual reductions can be made to something like  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. at which level frequent cutting should then be practised.

Thereafter, the nursery should be maintained on similar lines to the greens in play at all times, i.e. regular cutting, occasional scarification, adequate application of fertilizer along with weed, pest and disease control as necessary. Continuity of turf supply should be safeguarded by re-preparation of bare ground and re-sowing as the turf is used. When renovation is necessary it should be remembered that turf gives an immediate grass cover. Be prepared for any eventuality and start work on preparing a turf nursery now.

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