

Poa Annua in Putting Greens

By PETER W. LEES

Poa Annua, or Annual Meadow Grass, is usually looked upon by grass experts as nothing more or less than a weed, and its presence in a putting green most undesirable.

A great many claim that it is a perennial and not an annual, but this is wrong as its name is quite right and in accordance with the habits of the plant, as it is continually reseeding itself from the month of March until October and sometimes later.

The surface of a putting green has of necessity to be of a very close and even texture, and naturally this cannot be obtained by the use of grasses that will not blend or combine. As is well known to the expert greenkeeper, a perfectly true and smooth surface is absolutely desirable on a putting green.

This can easily be obtained by using a certain mixture of seeds, which blend and produce an even surface.

Naturally, the opposite, a patchy and uneven carpet of grass can just as easily be produced by sowing down with a mixture that will not blend.

A patchy and uneven carpet of grass is an abomination on a putting green, as it is an impossibility to judge the strength when putting.

In the great majority of new courses nowadays the greens and fairways are sown down, care being taken to select the best seed suitable to the soil, etc.

All goes well for a year or two perhaps when to the surprise of the greenkeeper, if he is of an observant nature, he will notice several small spots of foreign grass appear which to him seems very much out of place among his finer varieties. It is very probable that this is *Poa Annua*, and if it is it will soon assert itself in no uncertain manner.

There is no use trying to kill it out as it is there to stay. The other grasses must go, as it will most assuredly in a very short space of time eventually kill out all the other finer grasses.

I know of attempts which have been

made to eradicate it from greens by the process of weeding, but the results have always been a failure.

The question may be asked (and in my opinion it is easy to answer) that if it is impossible to eradicate it from the putting green what is to be done to solve the problem?

It may to many seem nonsense when I say cultivate and encourage it as much as possible, should *Poa Annua* appear in your greens. This is a bold assertion to make and many may not agree with me, but after careful study and experience I have come to the conclusion that if properly treated *Poa Annua* will render itself capable of being turned into as fine and true a surface as the most fastidious golfer may wish to putt on. I am of the opinion that if it were possible to collect the seed seedmen would have a very large sale for it, but being of a dwarf habit it will remain almost impossible to buy, at least in large quantities.

Its power of resisting drought is very well known and it is invaluable in dry and hot climates. It has been said that the appearance of *Poa Annua* in a green is a signal to the greenkeeper that something is wrong and nourishment is required. In regard to this I wish to take exception, as I myself have seen, on some of the best nourished greens in America, as well as on the other side, *Poa Annua* surely and certainly killing out all the other grasses. Attempts have been made to kill it out in several ways, but up to now, as far as I know, none have been successful. The problem is a big one seeing on account of the fact that it is continually seeding and the seed is being carried about by the wind.

From the foregoing it can be seen that I am not one who would take drastic measures against *Poa Annua* but on the other hand I would treat it in the right way and encourage it all I could. As I have said, and I say it again, if properly treated a fine smooth wear-resisting carpet of turf can be got from *Poa Annua*.

One great asset *Poa Annua* possesses

is its power of resisting drought. It may go brown when a drought sets in but at the first shower it is the first to get back its strength and color.

In patches *Poa Annua* is undesirable on a putting green, but uniformity all over the green gives an even true putting surface very easily.

In conclusion may I be permitted to say that amongst the finest putting greens in America, if not the best, were greens composed of nothing but pure *Poa Annua*, which had gradually killed out all fine grasses that had been sown.

Let me not be misunderstood in the foregoing in championing *Poa Annua* in the way I have done, as I have only dealt with it where it has appeared and established itself, as I do not for one minute say or assert that a somewhat better carpet of turf cannot be obtained by using and treating the finer varieties of grasses, but a *Poa Annua* green may be as fine as desired.

Autumn Sowing and Renovation of Golf Courses

By L. MACOMBER

THE best time of year to sow down new putting greens, fair greens, tees, lawns, etc., is between about the 15th or 20th of August and the 20th of September. The soil is warm at the end of the Summer season and sufficient rain and dew may be expected which will effect a quick germination and the young grass will become well established before the cold weather arrives. Then weeds are less in evidence in the Autumn than they are in the Spring, but it is always a good policy in sowing down new ground to turn over the soil and do the necessary grading in the Spring or early Summer—cultivating frequently to destroy any weed growth, so that when the seed bed is prepared, the soil is much cleaner and freer from weed seeds and the surface is consolidated. When work is

done in a hurry, it is generally badly done.

Topdress and renovate all existing turf on a much larger scale in the Autumn than in the Spring, using more seed, sand and compost; and improve parts of the fair greens that cannot be artificially watered.

We have had a very wet Spring and many courses especially on clay soil, have been in a very sticky, muddy condition most of the season. The excessive rain and dampness has no doubt caused sourness, and this should be corrected this Fall with a dressing of ground limestone on the fair greens, tees, etc., and pulverized charcoal together with previously sweetened composts and sand on the putting greens.

This has been a bad season for clover and water grass, or pearl wort, because of so much rain. Existing turf has thrived but Spring seeding has in many instances not been satisfactory—as heavy rains have caused washouts and uncovered the seed, but in other cases results have been good and it has been fortunate there has been so much rain.

Highly nitrogenous fertilizers should be used this Fall to encourage the grasses and not the clovers. While bone meal is a good fertilizer and best applied in the Autumn, it would not be advisable to use it this season on greens possessing much clover. It will quite often produce a thick crop of clover in a turf apparently free from clover.

The last of August or the first of September, according to the weather, the putting greens, tees, and important parts of the fair greens should be vigorously raked and cross-raked and on large areas tooth-harrow and cross-harrow, so as to open up the surface soil, and in some instances it may be advisable to use pitch forks, spiked boards or spiked rollers to perforate the surface.

Take out all weeds, crab grass and other objectionable growth, at the same time scratch up any clover patches. Then thicken up the existing turf with