

## Worms in Putting Greens, Should They be Removed?

By PETER W. LEES

WE are fast approaching the season where, on inland courses especially, worm casts on the putting greens will become a nuisance to the player and accurate putting become almost an impossibility. This subject is one that has to be treated very carefully, as it is one that is open to a great amount of discussion. Some people hold that worms in the soil act the part of a natural drainage; others take an entirely opposite view and I beg to cast my lot with the latter.

My experience is that worms have no place in the soil where a clean, firm, true and even carpet of turf is necessary. On a putting green it is absolutely essential that the surface should be as clean as possible, as the slightest unevenness will divert the ball on its way to the hole no matter how expert a putter the player may be. I say emphatically get rid of the worms.

This may seem to some people a bold assertion to make and especially to those who hold the view that the worms drain the soil. My experience is that where worms are allowed to burrow and throw up their casts all over the surface, the ground is in a much more wet and sour condition by a very long way than it is where the worms have been removed. Let anyone try it and watch the results.

The notion that a worm is Nature's drainer is without doubt an old fashioned idea and is entirely exploded. I believe that I can safely say that I, myself, was amongst the first, if not the very first to tackle this question. I well remember when I started in I was told by one of the very best players on the other side that I was assuredly killing my turf and that in six months' time my putting greens would go all to wreck. They did not, but on the

contrary they improved out of all recognition, and what is more they were played on all year round, never had a rest and when I left after eleven and a half years they were better than ever. Formerly, relief or winter greens had to be played during the wet winter months.

I have tried and also have seen tried a great many experiments in the way of keeping all the worms from coming to the surface. One I have noticed and which seems to be the most favored, that is when building a putting green, to put a thick layer of ashes below in the belief that this will keep the worms from coming through. It may help for a short time, but eventually the worms will get through and when once they do so, this green will be far worse than one that has not been treated.

I have come to the conclusion, gained by long and careful study, that the only way to deal with the pests is to get rid of them by killing them out. There are a great many so called worm destroyers on the market, but I would warn anyone to be very careful of the one they select. Some are deadly poison and no doubt kill the worms out without at the time seemingly doing any harm to the grass. My experience is that in time, however, they leave their mark behind and the greenkeeper must decide suddenly why his greens have gone wrong, little dreaming it was the worm killer he had applied.

I think I can safely say I have tried all the "Killers" known, but the one I have found to be the most effective, simple and at the same time absolutely safest, is Messrs. Carter's. There is no danger whatsoever in using it, but on the contrary it acts also as a fertilizer. If the instructions given are carefully carried out no further trouble will be had from worm casts, but a healthy, clean carpet of turf will take the place of the dirty, muddy one on which it will be a pleasure to putt on.