Maintenance Problems of Heavier Play
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Many problems face today's golf course superintendents, but the labor situation tops the list.

Salaries and wages use up nearly two-thirds of the budget, leaving only one-third for other items essential to maintaining a golf course in the condition required by today's players. But this high labor percentage isn't attracting workers. With the exception of three or four men the crew consists of school-age boys who only work about ten weeks. Consequently, little manpower is available for improving irrigation and drainage systems, rebuilding greens, and making other capital improvements during spring and fall. Few men have been looking for employment on golf courses in recent years because nearby factories have more to offer in pensions, sick benefits, hospital insurance, vacations, and overtime pay.

The increasing number of golfers has boosted labor costs even higher. Early morning golf is becoming quite a factor in the time required to do some of the jobs that can only be performed in the morning. And the increase in afternoon play has also affected the cost of maintenance jobs that must be done in the afternoon. Members in private clubs do not realize their interference and expect a great deal more courtesy than players at public fee courses.

During the 1952 season a nagging problem was the wilting of grass. No doubt the cause was warm temperatures and high humidity during the early part of the season. The grass did not have a chance to establish a root system deep enough to keep the grass alive through the hot summer months.

Light frequent watering during the day when the grass begins to show signs of wilting was the only solution to this problem. Of course this solution requires the superintendent to be on the job seven days a week and constantly on the move from green to green. But a little water...
at the proper time has saved many greens and probably many superintendent's job, even though golfers criticized the superintendent for watering during play.

When discussing grass during summer months, poa annua always receives much comment. Keeping poa annua out of watered fairways is always a headache. But if we had a reasonably-priced liquid fertilizer that could be used in a power sprayer during the summer and a fairway sprinkling system that permitted a light and more frequent watering we might be able to hold the poa annua through the hot summer. Since this method works on greens it should be satisfactory on fairways.

Research and experimentation have solved many equipment problems, but power putting green mowers, one of the most essential articles, can stand improvement. Some putting green mowers may do a good job on level greens but not on contoured greens. Others may do a fair job on the contours but fail to cut short and smooth. To overcome this defect the casters or rollers supporting the front end should be styled and placed to allow the mower to cut equally as well on soft, contoured greens at 3/16 in. as on hard, flat greens at a greater height. Furthermore the number of blades in the reel and the speed of the reel should be great enough so that the green is not left washboarded. The design engineers should also eliminate warping in the center of the bedknives.

Good Stand of Grass

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range of pH are the basis of these tests.

The amount of lime to apply depends upon the degree of acidity, the kind of soil, and the kind of grass. Sometimes the soil supply of available magnesium is low. This can be determined quickly by making a soil test. Then a dolomitic lime of high magnesium content should be used to correct soil acidity, because it supplies magnesium also, which plants need for normal growth. The figures in the foregoing tables can be used as a rough guide to decide upon the amount of lime to use.

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