

U-3 Bermuda Ingeniously Planted, Proves OK at K. C.

By O. J. NOER

DUDLEY Day is making good use of Hall's U-3 bermuda grass on the tees at Blue Hills CC, Kansas City, Mo. It has been such a conspicuous success that Dudley is confident U-3 will be the answer to the turf problem on the unshaded tees at the club.

The No. One tee was changed to Hall's U-3 bermuda grass first. It was done without interrupting play. Large size plugs were taken from the sod nursery and placed in the tee on 12 to 18 in. centers. Bermuda coverage was complete by August and provided good playing turf in contrast to the usual summertime cover of goose grass and crabgrass.

The Hall's U-3 bermuda tees have performed so well over a span of several years that club officials want the other tees changed to this grass.

Day now has a better way to make the change. He removes strips of sod from the nursery with a machine of his own design and manufacture. The sod strips are cut into convenient lengths for handling. They are 2 in. wide and about the same thickness. The nursery is of the solid sod type, closely cut and well kept.

The present method of changing tees to Hall's U-3 bermuda grass is to cut 2 x 2 strips in the tees with the sod stripper. The strips are 12 to 18 in. apart. The sod strips from the sod nursery are inserted in the prepared slits in the tees. Workmen see that the joints along the edge are tight. Surface debris is removed.

(See detail on opposite page.)

The tee is watered thoroughly and kept moist until the bermuda starts growth. Play continues without interruption. Under a program of generous fertilization the bermuda takes over within several months provided temperatures are within the range for optimum growth of bermuda grass.

The bermuda grass tees at Blue Hills are cut close with a power mower. Surfaces are ideal for play and close cutting is better for this strain of grass.

Up to now there has been no winter

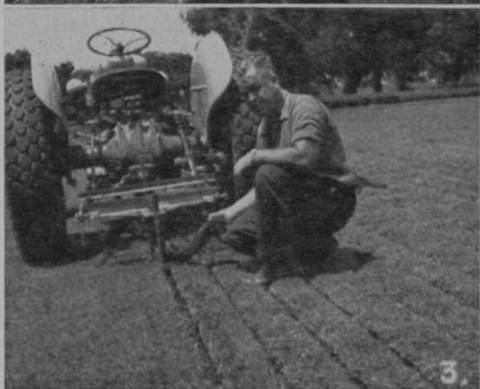
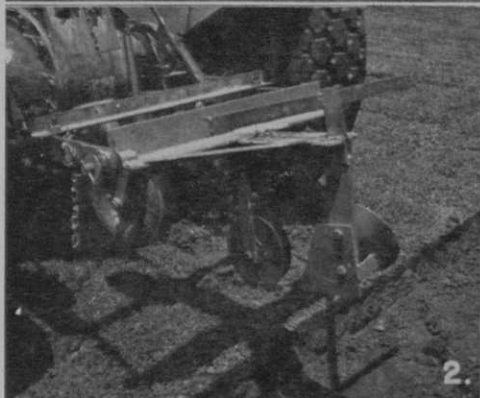
kill of the Hall's U-3 bermuda at Blue Hills. Others have not fared that well. The so-called winter kill may not be due to low temperatures but the result of wind burn and desiccation.

Day waters the bermuda tees heavily several times during the spring even though the bermuda grass is dormant. He starts as soon as danger of water freezing in the pipes is over. The use of water on dormant bermuda grass is common practice in Oklahoma and west Texas. This practice has prevented serious winter time loss of grass in both areas.

At Blue Hills Hall's U-3 bermuda grass tees are used for summer time play only. They are put into use after growth starts in the spring. Play stops in the fall just before bermuda grass goes dormant. Winter use under heavy play will result in loss of the bermuda eventually and unwarranted condemnation of the grass will follow. Dormant bermuda turf cannot withstand the excessive wear from player traffic and divots. Both deplete the grass of the stored reserve food needed to initiate growth in the spring. The effect may escape notice the first or even the second year but before too long the bermuda grass will fail to survive the winter.

Other clubs in the belt from Kansas City across to Washington and Philadelphia may find Hall's U-3 bermuda grass a good one for tees. The wise method is to establish a small sized nursery first and then test the grass on one or two tees for a year or two before going into an all out program. Aside from learning about winter hardiness this method affords an opportunity to become familiar with the grass and learn how to maintain it.

Hall's U-3 bermuda grass or any other bermuda is not likely to succeed farther north. Hall's U-3 and Tifton 127 have winter-killed the last two winters on our plots in Milwaukee. These were comparatively mild winters. Half the plots were covered during the past winter. Survival was no better than on the exposed part of the plot.



(1). Dudley Day designed and built this machine for planting strips of Hall's U-3 bermuda sod into the tees at Blue Hills CC. (2). The stripper is attached to the hydraulic lift on a farm type tractor. There are two cutting type discs followed by a small plow to lift the sod strip. (3). The Hall's U-3 bermuda grass sod nursery. Dudley Day holds a strip which will be used on a tee. (4). The nursery is leveled with soil after removing the strips of Hall's U-3 bermuda sod. The surface covers quickly as indicated. (5). The first operation on the tee is with the strip cutter. Strips are spaced a foot or more apart. (6). The second operation is to insert the sod strips of Hall's U-3 bermuda grass. Coverage occurs by August when planting is done in early June.