



CHARTER

Mid-Atlantic Newsletter



Published by:

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the Advancement of the
Golf course Superintendent through Education and Merit

Volume XXXIII

April 1980

Number 3

Topdressing By Michael Larsen

A sound topdressing program is an important and integral part in producing a quality putting surface. As turfgrass managers, we are all conscious of the benefits of topdressing: leveling the putting surface, controlling thatch, adding a more desirable soil for turf growth and development, and alleviating grain by promoting the upright growth of the grass plant. In this article, I will outline the successful topdressing program I have employed at Hillendale Country Club over the years.

The greens, which average 5000 square feet, are closed the latter part of December and temporary greens are played until favorable conditions warrant reopening them in the spring. Just after the greens are closed for the winter we apply our heaviest application of topdressing of approximately 2 cubic yards of material per green. This application serves several purposes. First, it protects the crown of the plant from winter dessication. Yet another



April President's Message

As always, the Mid-Atlantic Association was well represented at the GCSAA Conference held in St. Louis, Mo. Everyone will agree that the Equipment Show and Convention Center was second to none.

Educational sessions were not as good as in previous years. Fertility, Pythium Control and "Think Superintendent" were probably the highlights of the educational session.

However, more and more superintendents are taking advantage of the pre-conference seminars such as Plant Nutrition, Landscaping, Irrigation, Pesticides and Management, for certification renewal or for a personal achievement.

Hopefully, GCSAA will continue to offer these seminars and more, to strengthen and broaden superintendents' education and ability to make us better turf managers.

George Thompson is our GCSAA Chapter Relations Representative. If you have any ideas that you would like to see implemented in the National, please contact George.

A big thank you is in order to Gerry Gerard and co-workers at Bretton Woods for the hospitality extended to us for our March meeting. I'm sure the more than seventy that attended fully enjoyed themselves. **THANK YOU, GERRY!**

As scheduled, our April meeting will be held at Green Hill Yacht and Country Club, Salisbury, Maryland. Eastern Shore's hospitality is always great. Looking forward to seeing all of you on April 8 with Lou White as our host.



advantage to this heavy topdressing is the early spring green up it gives due to the dark particles attracting sunlight and heating up the soil surface. Presently, I am conducting an experiment on a bentgrass nursery to illustrate this striking effect. Hopefully, I will be able to share some of the resulting information with you at one of our monthly meetings through a slide presentation.

Starting in April, we routinely topdress greens every 3 weeks throughout the season. For these applications a smaller amount of material is applied, usually about 1/3 cubic yard per green. This amount of topdressing suits our needs and was decided upon through experimentation and recommendation suggested by the U.S.G.A.

The topdressing we use in the Egypt Farms 7:2:1 mix and is applied with a Cushman topdresser. The spreader setting for the heavy winter application is 1, the lighter application setting is below 1/4.

During the spreading operation the Cushman is operated in 1st gear low range at approximately 2500 RPM.

As with all operations on the golf course, there is a certain procedure we follow in our topdressing program. The greens are first verticut lightly in two directions, mowed, then topdressed. Although, verticutting is an integral part of the topdressing program, we sometimes verticut between topdressing applications. The topdressing is worked in by using a Har Tru tennis court brush, an idea passed on to me by Jack Montecalvo at Woodholme Country Club. The light applications of topdressing virtually disappear after brushing.

Topdressing greens is performed on Mondays because of minimal player interruption. The entire operation of vertical mowing and brushing 19 greens takes 4 men about 6 hours to complete.

Ron

Continued on page 2

Topdressing by Michael Larsen

Continued from page 1

Due to the abrasive nature of the topdressing, we do not mow the day after topdressing but resume our regular mowing schedule the second day. If you have an old set of reels for your greensmowers, I would suggest you use these for your first mowing after topdressing.

With topdressing every 3 weeks, the greens receive about 10 applications a year. The cost of such a program is minimal. I budget \$3,000 a year for topdressing which represents less than 2% of my budget. This is sufficient to complete my topdressing program with enough on hand to repair divots and ball marks.

I do not think of my verticutting and topdressing programs as an extra operation to perform, but consider it as part of my regular maintenance program. I realize that uncontrollable circumstances, such as rain, sometimes interrupt schedules, but as turfgrass managers we learn very early in our careers to be flexible and always find some way to "Get the job done".

Unfortunately budgetary limitations may prevent some of you from topdressing with the frequency that I do, but I feel many of us could budget our time and money to topdress more frequently. Topdressing, usually represents a small percentage of a budget. When comparing dollars to benefits, a consistent topdressing program is a bargain in providing golfers with quality putting greens.

BWRC — March Meeting

The 1980 Mid-Atlantic year started off with a bang. Over seventy members and guests enjoyed an outstanding buffet and open bar at Bretton Woods. Host Gerry Gerard and General Manager, Tom Yann received a big round of applause for giving us an enjoyable evening.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Dr. Ron Seilel, Director, Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland. He told us about the Institute of Applied Agriculture and stressed the point that they are lacking students for the coming year.

Dr. Dave Wehner explained to us the reasons that he is leaving the University of Maryland. He said that his main reason was the lack of research facilities and the present uncertainties of the future turf program. He will be going to the University of Illinois. He said that we all should write letters to the State government protesting the sale of the turf research farm.

Six golfers braved the cool weather to play 9 holes. No golf prizes were given.

Ben Stagg won the 50-50.

APRIL 8 MEETING MID-ATLANTIC A.G.C.S.

WELCOME to Green Hill Yacht and Country Club. Green Hill is an 18 hole private country club organized in 1925 and opened for play in 1927. The original club house was built in 1928. In its early years it was a flat course, tees, greens and fairways. In 1931 the club acquired the services of Dr. Werner from Philadelphia, Pa. to design new greens and traps for the nine holes. In 1949 Mr. Alfred Tull designed the new nine and Russell Kerns, the Superintendent at that time, built the new nine. The course was opened for play in 1951. It was seeded to bluegrass and fescue.

In 1965 I came to Green Hill and in 1967 began planting Bermuda grass fairways and tees. Needless to say, we have since gone to a mixture of Manhattan, Citation and Pennfine ryegrass. We still have about seventy percent Bermuda.

Our fertilizer program is conservative. Four to five pounds "N" per thousand on fairways; six pounds "N" on tees; and five to six on greens.

We use Balan on our fairways and Ronstar in the approaches and tees. Two applications, April and August 1st. Tri-calcium Ars nate will be applied for the last time this spring unless I can find some from any place. We spray on a preventive program.

We do have drainage problems and will probably be working on these when you arrive.

I was raised on the golf course and worked under my father who was the first "Greens Keeper". I came back to Green Hill from the Elks Club in Salisbury in 1965.

Golf: Anytime after 11:30 — Carts-\$12.00

Lunch: Available any time — Cash Bar

Dinner: 6:30 — \$12.50

Program: There will be no guest speaker. Lou White has asked for an open meeting for discussion about his golf course.

Directions: Rt. 50 East to Salisbury, Md; cross single railroad track; turn right on Rt. 349; follow to sign on left 8 miles out; turn left on 352 to club. **YOU ALL COME!!**

Lou White