

Championship Green Secrets Revealed

by Douglas T. Hawes

Just before he left the USGA to join the PGA Tour as agronomist, I called Billy Buchanan to ask him for the secrets of maintaining championship greens. He said, "Doug, you're not going to believe it, but the secrets of championship greens aren't all that secret. Many superintendents maintain their greens this way all the time."

Well, I acted real innocent and said, "Billy, if that is the case, maybe you could tell these secrets to me before you leave." He said, "I would love to," and this is what he told me:

"You throw all the fertilizer spreaders away and buy a large spoon. Once a week during the growing season, you stand downwind about 10 yards off the edge of each green and throw a spoonful of fertilizer up in the air. Use a little left-to-right motion to help spread it and keep the spoon about head high. The ideal wind is one blowing about 15 miles an hour. In West Texas, you may have to hold the spoon lower, because the wind probably doesn't ever blow that gently."

He went on to say that after about 2 years of feeding the grass this way, you will note that the grass never lies down when anybody comes within 10 yards of it. It stands tall, hoping to catch at least one particle of fertilizer that gets thrown its way each week. Thus, grain problems are solved. As the grass is not growing, daily mowing just trues the surface like a light rolling, and superintendents have no messy, wet clippings to deal with. They just empty the baskets every few greens.

Now, you may not believe every word of the above, but the next time you hear of a superintendent spoon-feeding his greens, check it out. He will probably be applying no more than a quarter pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet. He may be putting one pound of urea (45-0-0) in his spray tank each week and covering 30-40,000 square feet with that tank full. That amounts to less than one ounce of nitrogen per thousand square feet—a "sniff." He might well use potassium nitrate (saltpeter) or ferrous ammonium sulfate instead of the urea. A program this light he probably calls his summer feeding program. Many managers of championship bentgrass greens do not feed them at all from late June to early September.



Former President Gerald Ford tells the banquet audience about Bob Hope's claim that Mr. Ford had even lost two balls in the ball washer at the Hope Classic, as new GCSAA president Gene Baston looks on.

Match Play Event Starts in April

This year's Match Play Championship will get underway in April, according to Golf Chairman Dick Gieselman, who also announced a new scoring system for the tournament. This year, each match will have 3 points—1 for the front nine, 1 for the back, and 1 for winning the most holes in the match. The 18-hole total will be used as a possible tiebreaker.

NEW MEMBERS

David J. Seidenberger, Class D
Assistant Superintendent,
Hunt Valley Golf Club

John J. Davis, Class F.
Sales Manager
T.E.I., Construction Fabrics Division

Charles Dewey (Dee) Robinson, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
Cedar Crest Country Club

Robert D. Wilbur, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
Army Navy Country Club

Peter R. Schmidt, Class D
(Non-Resident)
Assistant Superintendent
Shenandoah Valley Golf Club

Bert C. Amidon, Class D
Superintendent
Lake-of-the-Woods

Mark S. Merrick, Class D
Assistant Superintendent
Towson Golf & Country Club

Lentz Wheeler, Class A
Superintendent
Reston South Golf Course

Doug Stanley, Class A
Superintendent
Medal of Honor Golf Course

Wayne R. Sasser, Class A
Superintendent
Chantilly National Golf & CC

Richard A. Piatnek, Class F
Sales Manager
Egypt Farms, Inc.

Meeting Schedule, 1985

- March 12 — Westwood C.C., Tom Haske, Host
- April 9 — Hog Neck G.C., Ben Stagg, Host
- May 14 — Woodmont C.C. (Supt.-Pro Tournament), Mike Larsen, Host
- June 11 — Montgomery C.C., Jeff Miskin, Host
- July 9 — Winters Run G.C. (luncheon meeting), John Drew, Host
- August 13 — Bretton Woods, Annual Picnic, Gerry Gerard, Host
- September 10 — Hobbits Glen G.C., Bill Neus, Host
- October 14 — International C.C., Steve Nash, Host
- November 12 — Hunt Balley G.C., Bob Orazi, Host
- December 10, Naval Academy, Mike McKenzie, Host