

Dealing Death to Earth Worms

By CHRISTOPHER BAIN

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Christopher Bain

SOME authorities claim that we need the worm for drainage purposes. Well all I have to say is, get good drainage and you will have fewer worms and better greens. For a healthy growth of grass it is necessary that the surface be kept open so that air may reach the roots of the grass and drainage obtained at the same time, but personally I don't look to Mr. Worm to supply the drainage.

From observation you will find that heavy and undrained soil gives a liberal supply of worms as against a heavy and well drained soil. Naturally a light and well drained soil is still less favorable to the worm.

As to the extermination of the worm there are many worm killers on the market but I have been asked to give results obtained by the use of Corrosive Sublimite (bichloride of mercury), an exterminator I have used for many years.

I have used corrosive sublimite mixed with sand, broadcasted and watered in. I obtained good results from this method, but found it dangerous owing to the water and powder settling in "pockets" on low portions of the green and either killing or greatly retarding the grass in that particular spot. I then made a liquid solution and added same to a given quantity of water. This system was quite successful. However at times I felt I did not get

the desired strength, so I forsook this method and now simply add my powder to the water as used—stirring the whole up before applying.

With this system, I am led to understand, some greenkeepers do not obtain quite as good results as from the

use of other destroyers. However, I believe this to be mainly due to the time of application and not to any fault of the powder.

With many exterminators, such as Mowrah meal for instance, we are told to apply on a dull day following rain, and this rule appears to be the one generally followed with all exterminators.

Delay Application After Rain Fall

After careful observation I have found the second or third day after a rain to be best, and it is immaterial whether the sun shines or the weather be dull.

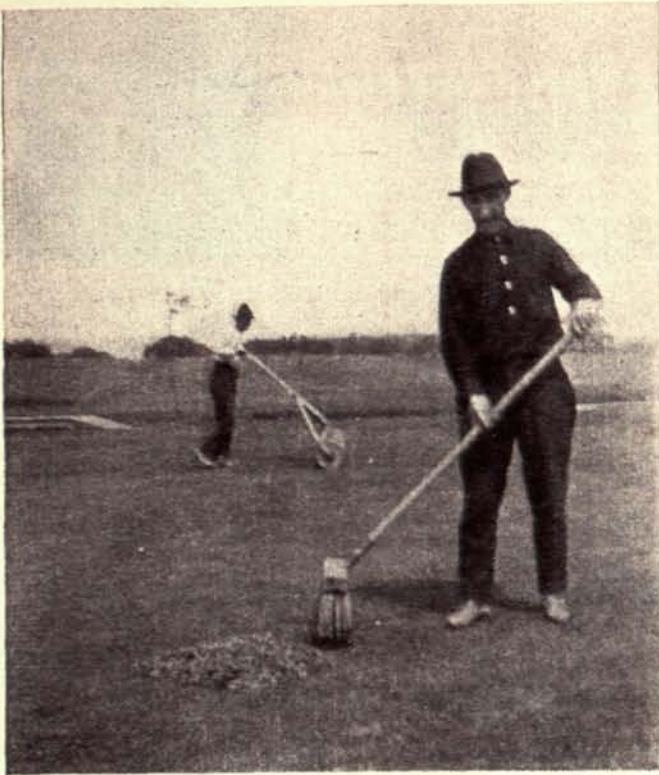
Naturally you ask why the 2nd or 3rd day and not immediately when the worm is nearest the top and busy? I may say that after heavy rains Mr. Worm keeps busy for quite a few days, and my contention is that while the soil is saturated with water it is more difficult to get to the worm, and the exterminator quickly loses its strength in the soggy green.

A day or so after rain the worm-run is again open and in working order. As you may know in the worm



BY THEIR WORKS—

THE earthworm's getting busy and he's coming up to see if he can build a mountain where no mountain ought to be. And with him come a horde of little relatives who know from long association with their fellows down below, that if they work most faithfully toward the rising sun, they'll have a multitude of hills to show for what they've done. And after they've accomplished what they started out to do, they wriggle down a little bit and listen in on you. You tee off with a flourish and you make the green one up; your ball rolls slowly to within a few feet of the cup—and then you hear a chuckle and you wonder what's the joke, and take your stance with confidence for one short easy stroke. A perfect putt ahead of you, but do you make it? No! The earthworm's got it fixed just where that little ball will go. You don't join in the chuckle, but you cuss him out instead, and bring down maledictions upon his slimy head. And if the keeper of the greens were near enough to hear, he'd get another name for Nature's Drainage Engineer.



Sweeping up earthworms with a barn broom at Oakwood

burrow you find in dry weather small particles of grass, leaves, etc., which combined with the slime thrown off by the worm leaves a nice runway for his going and coming.

It also makes a good conductor for the poison to reach him and either kill him in his burrow or make him come above ground.

The worm is most susceptible and sensitive to any irritant; hence it is that even an application of soapy water will give results; but we are after his scalp and nothing short of death satisfies a Greenkeeper so we like a more virulent form of poison and so far I have not succeeded in obtaining any better results, with a minimum of labor, than by using Corrosive Sublimate applied by the sprinkling barrel method.

Mercury Now Advocated for Brown Patch

Now a word on Brown Patch. Having for many years observed that Greens infested with worms, and requiring frequent applications of Corrosive Sublimate during periods of rain, were practically immune from Brown Patch, I became convinced that the applying of Bichloride of Mercury for eradication of worms performed a two-fold purpose, i.e., the destruction of the worm plus an effective control of conditions favorable to Brown Patch.

Some considerable time ago I mentioned this fact to two recognized authorities of the U. S. Green Section. At that time they had not investigated the mercuric treatment as a preventive and were unable to endorse my opinion. Today Corrosive Sublimate is endorsed by the Green Section and the majority of commercial compounds advocated as preventives are mercuric preparations.

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