

# Maintaining Greens on Sandy Soil

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**M**ANY fine articles by greenkeepers have come out in our magazine, and I have enjoyed reading them, but cannot get much of a thrill out of writing one myself.

Nothing less than the fear that Mrs. Farley (having become so good a poetess) might leave us if we do not give her full support, would induce me to try this article.

The first nine greens at Madison were seeded in the spring of 1922 to red fescue and redtop. We have a sandy soil which dries out very quickly, and the natives used to come over the first season and laugh and wonder if we expected to grow grass. Eventually, the redtop disappeared and the fescue proved unsatisfactory. Clover was also getting the upper hand and much discussion took place as to what should be done.

## ***Turf Difficult To Establish***

Meanwhile during the fall of 1923 the eighteen greens received a reseedling of ten to fifteen pounds of South German creeping bent seed to each green.

This was repeated in the fall of 1924 and 1925. This seed was put in with a wheelbarrow seeder, and then the greens were heavily composted. It took at least two years with us before any of the first seeding became very prominent.

## ***Sulphate Proved A Boon***

The first two seasons I was exceedingly green as a greenkeeper, and had not struck the proper gait. My soil was very sweet from the start and crab grass was an annual curse. This was thoroughly weeded out each year at considerable expense.

Starting with the spring of 1925 I commenced to use large amounts of sulphate of ammonia. I have used an average of four tons a year on 27 greens for the last three seasons.

By the continued use of sulphate, as well as one application of Milorganite a year, putting finer nozzles on my sprinklers, and with proper composting each year I have improved my greens wonderfully.

I have found Milorganite the best thing next to sulphate I could use to thicken grass on this sandy soil.

## ***Rate of Application***

South German creeping bent consists mainly of velvet and Rhode Island bent, and with me was very slow to spread until I began a heavy use of sulphate. I can hear

someone saying, "too much sulphate," but I have demonstrated that less did not do the work. Ten pounds to a green would grow grass, but I had to make an acid soil, and I feel that my compost was adding

some lime and also the greens were somewhat sweeter each spring than when they went into the winter.

I use a barrel with boom to apply sulphate—ten pounds sulphate to the fifty-gallon barrel. Two and three barrels to a green and even four on the larger ones. Applications are regulated according to the amount of grass the boys are getting from their greens.

The Green Section says, "encourage what grass you have rather than reseed." I believe in that too, only I did not have the right grasses to start with. My greens are mowed very closely, six days a week, and kept constantly moist. Everybody who plays over them comes back for more golf, so I believe our putting surface is now fairly well up to standard.

*(Editors note: The greens at Madison Golf Lakelands are some of the best in the Cleveland district, although the soil Mr. Aldrich has to deal with is so sandy that holding moisture and fertility is a difficult problem.)*



**Stanley M. Aldrich**

## **Notice to Chairmen of Green Committees**

The program which will be presented at the coming annual convention of the National Association of Greenkeepers of America is of vital interest to you and to your greenkeeper.

You are cordially invited to attend the meetings of February 23 and 24 at the Hotel Fort Shelby, Detroit.

The foremost golf course maintenance experts of the United States and Canada will talk on subjects of direct interest to you. Read pages 18 and 19 in this issue, and make early reservations at the Fort Shelby.