

Keeping The Course Groomed

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THE gift of writing one's thoughts is given to few. I am sorry to say I am not one of those, but I will do my best to convey to those who read this, an idea of my system of maintenance, I will say I have read with interest the articles written by my fellow greenkeepers in *THE NATIONAL GREENKEEPER*, which have been frequently beneficial, so I hope some may find what I have to say of some interest to them.

Distribution of Labor

Without system very little is accomplished. It is necessary to have a system of maintenance worked out if one intends to have a well groomed course. During the early season when the preliminary work is in progress, I observe the men closely and pick out men who I think are best suited for the different positions to which they will later be required to give their entire attention. I select nine men, and allot to each two greens, two tees, the sand traps, bunkers, etc. around or adjacent to the greens (our greens average 10,000 sq. ft.) one man for the nursery and putting green, two men for the tractors for fairway mowing, two men to care for the fairway bunkers and traps, one man for the Fordson tractor and truck, and one man a handy mechanic.

As soon as weather permits and the necessary patching and cleaning up is done in the spring, the men are started on their allotted greens to give them their spring overhauling, weeding, raking, etc. At this time it is not necessary to cut the greens every day.

System of Top Dressing and Fertilization

When the greens have been thoroughly freed from weeds, they are given their first top-dressing, using better than fifty per cent of sand for the first dressing. My schedule of top-dressing is every three weeks, as I believe three weeks of cutting every day, saps the vitality of the grass, and it is necessary to give it some nourishment. The greens are brushed and cut every morning. During the brown-patch season, I eliminate Ammonium Sulphate, as I believe through its rapid stimulating effects, it keeps the grass in a soft and weakened condition, and is not able to withstand the ravaging effects of brown-patch. During the brown-patch season I try to keep my greens rather on the dry side, and during the crab grass season I neglect everything around the greens

but cutting. The crab grass must come out before anything else is done. The more crab grass you leave on the green the more you will have the following year. It is hard to keep out altogether, as the seeds are carried on the shoes from the fairways.

The two men who have the fairway traps and bunkers, are started as early as possible to loosen the sand and put the traps in playing condition. One of these men keeps the tees in condition, plugging them every morning.

The tractor men for the fairways work with the men on the fairway traps until the fairways are in need of cutting or rolling, and in spare time after the fairways are cut.

The fairways are cut three times a week until the first of July, and again after the first of September.

Control of Dandelions With Iron Sulphate

The man on the Fordson tractor and truck keeps the rough cut, using a sickle mower attachment on the tractor. He also keeps the grass clippings cleaned around the greens, fairways and bunkers, with the Ford truck. He also sprays the dandelions, using a two hundred gallon power sprayer, with a potato sprayer attachment, which is attached to the rear of the sprayer.

The material used for spraying is iron sulphate (copperas) and with this we have been successful in controlling the dandelions on our course.

The handy mechanic keeps the machinery in condition, also adjusts the knives of the green mowers every second morning.

Fairway Watering System

As our fairways are watered in dry weather, it is necessary to employ six extra men during this period, which lasts from five weeks to two months. It is well to commence in time. A soaking rain will carry the fairways about ten days, and it takes us seven days to water our fairways. That means three days after a rain, the sprinklers must be put in operation. The greens are watered in the morning by the men in charge of the greens.

I find this system very practical and successful. My efficiency expert is a pair of field glasses.