

Developing a Course Out of Blow Sand

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I HAVE been for about twenty-five years in golf construction and maintenance, and feel safe in saying that golf course work is nothing but landscape and art gardening in all its most essential points. The late Professor Piper agreed with me on this subject, and in him I lost a wonderful friend.

When I first went into golf I was told by experts on golf construction, chairmen, etc., that I would have to forget landscape gardening, that golf was entirely different, but soon found how wrong this was as I have in my work on a golf course used at some time or other every bit of knowledge I had. Of course I was always in charge of the ornamental parts of grounds along with the golf course.

Starting With Blow-sand and Quicksand

The grounds of Plum Hollow Golf Club were nothing but a wind-swept waste when I arrived here about seven years ago. Nothing ever grew here except perhaps a few sand burrs. I had nothing to work on but blow-sand with a sub strata of quicksand which we are still fighting, also our soil even now is leachy, and is hard to keep fertile.

I was told by natives of this "Hollow" I would never get anything to grow here, and many local greenkeepers, among them Alex McPherson, advised me to chuck the job before I ruined my reputation as a greenkeeper. I knew, however, what we had done with sandy wastes in Holland, and today feel that Plum Hollow Golf Course will be a monument to me when I have passed on.

Landscape Artistry in Construction

I built this course and everything on it, including our bridges, changing even the course of our creek; taking



The guardian of the Varn Hagen family keeping watch at Number 17 green at the Plum Hollow Club

in, enlarging upon and enhancing every natural point of beauty as time goes on, as it is only an infant as golf courses go.

The placing of every shovelful of sand was well thought over, wild trees and bushes were transplanted, and even surrounding properties with any claim to beauty were brought into the picture by clearing and perspective.

What a Greenkeeper Must Know

To get back to the job of golf course construction I feel that every greenkeeper worthy of the name is a landscape of art gardener, as he must know how to topograph his land, must have knowledge of mensuration,

He has trees under his care so must understand forestry, pruning and grafting to some extent.

If he is in charge of ornamental parts of grounds he must be a nurseryman and florist, and in some cases orchardist and even vegetable gardener.

He must know the building of driveways, rockeries, terraces, drainage, waterways and water systems. He must have a good knowledge of machinery and electricity.

He looks after the bird life on his grounds and thousands of other things which come up in the studies of a landscape gardener.

Association and Magazine of Great Help

The demands made upon a modern greenkeeper are so many that only a part of the story of his achievements is written upon his greens.

As a man who has always been studiously inclined, and who has used for many years both theoretical and practical knowledge, I would like to say that the National Association of Greenkeepers and this magazine are not only worth while to every man who has a golf course under his supervision, but they are of great importance indeed.

Nearly every greenkeeper has some hobby in connection with his work, or some method he has originated to lessen labor cost. Some greenkeepers are expert mechanics, and often have inventive minds. What better service can an Association member render than contributing to this magazine a description of his "pet" method or invention, that others less gifted may profit therefrom?



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