

Humus For The Soils

By JAMES A. SMITH, *Greenkeeper*
London Country Club, London, Ohio

SINCE the important feature gained by the complete incorporation of a good humus in the top six inches of the putting green is that of creating proper physical conditions rather than of fertilization, more care must be used in the selection of humus than has been considered necessary in the past.

From its use we should expect to gain:

POROSITY: The rapid passage of water into the soil at any ordinary sprinkling speed.

MOISTURE RETENTION: The holding back of moisture after porosity and good drainage has allowed easy passage of water and air through the soil at time of sprinkling.

AERATION: The easy passage of water to any depth will necessarily draw air after it, keeping active the bacteria which are producing feedings for the vegetation above.

ROOTAGE DEPTH: A good rootage depth insures deeper feeding areas, since practically all plant food must be taken up through the rootage in the effort to replace moisture lost by evaporation through the grass blades. Rootage depth may be expected with bent grasses at the lowest point at which, through mellowness, there has been allowed an easy movement of moisture and air. The reasonable cutting of healthy, vigorous turf, does not materially effect the rootage depth.

To do these things, a humus should have the following characteristics:

It should be the result of complete decay of hard woods, not weeds, and have the appearance and cellular structure of a fine charcoal.

One level pint of sun dried humus should weigh not more than 11 ounces, which shows freedom from silt which might have been washed in upon it.

One level pint of sun dried humus when thoroughly wet, the excess moisture having been removed in a fine cloth or bag, should weigh at least 23 ounces.

It should be of such fineness that approximately ninety per cent would, when dry, pass

through a screen ten meshes to the inch, without rubbing.

A quart of humus as received in shipment, should on drying measure approximately one pint.

It should have been removed from well cultivated and well drained land and be alkaline or at least neutral in reaction.

The litmus test for acidity is not always conclusive but it is a poor indication if on wetting it should turn blue litmus paper red.

Humus in the pile after becoming wetted by rain fall on the surface, should not show cracks on drying but should crumble to its original fineness. If cracks appear the actual humus content is too low.

Most of our garden seeds in good plain humus and properly cared for, should show a germination of approximately 100 per cent.

Never purchase humus for other than the physical improvement of soil. For years, as a protection to farmers in their purchase of fertilizers, it has been illegal in the State of Ohio to market humus with any claim for fertilizing value. It does have a feeding value in the soil but this is too slowly available to warrant any claim as a fertilizer.

The amount of humus needed should be anticipated and bought during a dry season. Twenty tons of a good humus shipped dry, would weigh fifty tons if shipped wet. Reliable dealers through storage made in the dry season of the year, are able to keep the moisture content comparatively low.

Good humus properly used will return a magnificent profit. Improperly used, it may become a liability.

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