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National Association
of Greenkeepers of
America

One Hundred Million A Year

What part of this vast sum does the greenkeeper spend? A review of the responsibilities of these men of destiny.

By T. H. RIGGS MILLER, *Greenkeeper*
Richmond County Country Club, Staten Island, N. Y.

Address delivered at the Annual Dinner of Metropolitan Greenkeepers
in New York City, January 28, 1929

"GOLF has become our national game," says Mr. Conde Nast, writing in the January number of *The American Golfer*, "but in America, it has grown to be a good deal more than a game. It is an economic force.

"During the past thirty years I have watched it capture the imagination of the American people—seen it change American ways of living—add years of youth to the men and women who play it—and seen it grow from a fad of a few to the most popular of all our national sports.

"The spread of golf has been fantastic. In America there are 3,000,000 men who play it and 1,000,000 women . . . \$1,500,000,000 has been invested in courses, clubhouses, and equipment . . . \$100,000,000.00 is annually expended on the game. I have a deep-rooted faith in golf, not only as America's most popular game, but as an integral and rapidly growing part of our American life."

Immediately the thought arises—what part of the hundred million dollars expended annually on the game do the greenkeepers have the spending of? It is estimated that there are 6,000 golf courses in the states. In order to be on the safe side, let us say there are 5,000. The maintenance cost of these 5,000 courses

varies from \$4,000 to \$50,000 per year each. I think we can say an average cost of \$20,000 which is the very minimum for any Metropolitan course; 5000x20000 equals 100 million dollars or 10% of the total sum spent on the game; this means that 10c of every dollar spent on golf, whether it be clubs, balls, stockings, meals or taxes, is used for maintenance of courses by the greenkeepers of America.



T. H. RIGGS MILLER

We are assembled here tonight as the Metropolitan Greenkeepers Association, representing possibly the largest number of golf courses in any given area on the face of the earth. These greenkeepers associations are formed for the promotion of acquaintance, education, and cooperation among its members, together with study and discussion, that will enable us to have a better understanding of greenkeeping in its broadest aspects.

It therefore behooves every greenkeeper to belong to, and attend regularly the meetings of his local organization, and become affiliated with the National body.

Self-Preservation is First Law

THE reasons for becoming members are many, but possibly the main reason is one of self-preservation. Self-preservation is the first primary law. "The desire to live." For

this reason babies cry when hungry. They are afraid of their mother's forgetting to feed them; they desire to live. The Green Section at Washington, caused this kind of a cry when it was first formed, not only with the greenkeepers, but with the seedsmen, and golf equipment manufacturers as well—now the New York State Golf Association with the aid of the Cornell University, has decided to manufacture greenkeepers out of those agricultural students, who do not *CHOOSE* to go "back to the farm."

If it were not for the fact that the majority of greenkeepers have advanced faster than the U. S. G. A. Green Section, they would now be in a very sorry plight, for, even now, the dream of making greenkeepers out of the Chairman of green committees is not dead. Not that the greenkeeper does not want him to understand their work, but as in any other thing, "a little knowledge is dangerous." What the greenkeeper does not want is that the Chairman take over the planning and control and leave him as a simple gang boss:

AUTHOR HEADS COMMITTEE

The author of this article, Mr. T. H. Riggs Miller was appointed Chairman of the Educational Committee of the National Association of Greenkeepers of America at the recent Convention in Buffalo. He will have a mixed committee of greenkeepers and college professors to work out turf problems from both the practical and scientific standpoint.

which was the basic idea of the U. S. G. A. Green Section. On the other hand the greenkeeper welcomes conferences with the green committees which should be held at least once a month. At these meetings every phase of the work should be gone over. The Green committee should act as the instrument for putting through any program that might be decided on, as well as to undertake selling the ideas to the membership. These conferences are bound to show up any weakness of the greenkeeper and the committee might decide to make a change which is their privilege to do.

Therefore, to my brother greenkeepers I would say, that, unless we of our own free will, band together for the exchange of ideas, form study clubs for the dissemination of knowledge of greenkeeping and the management of men, we will not be able to give the club, what others can, and thus justify them in replacing us with these students, or on the other hand make us subject to their **Expert Advice**, and pass through a blight such as we passed through during the first years of the Green Section, and the early days of the Service Bureau. Knowledge is power, and the fruits our organizations have borne, even by a handful of greenkeepers you might say, is ample proof of what can be done, and is a small indication of what can be expected, when every greenkeeper in the land is a member of the NATIONAL.

Education Is Necessary

AN EDUCATIONAL campaign is necessary to sell ourselves to the clubs and golfers in general. Some of the things we must let our club executives know is, that proper greenkeeping cannot be secured by the artificial grafting on to the greenkeeper disassociated projects. Greenkeepers all over the country have proved it is in them to do big things when they get a chance. It is realized that greenkeeping practice during recent years has undergone a change.

For instance a few years ago the chairman of greens and the professional did not feel it worth while to report to the greenkeeper what was happening and what plans were being developed—not that they wanted to keep the greenkeeper uninformed. They had overlooked him; they had forgotten him; yet all the time they would admit the greenkeeper was an important individual. Then when the green sections and service bureaus arrived, the greenkeeper got sidetracked altogether so that by and by he became confused. Vital decisions seriously affecting his own work and that of the men under him, were being made over the greenkeeper's head. He didn't know whether he was in control or not. He knew he was still responsible, but he didn't know how far he could go.

The greenkeeper's self-confidence was destroyed; he became crippled. It was always the chairmen who were addressed by the Green Section, never the greenkeeper; in other words, he has always been thought of, in the abstract, as a necessary evil. We note that this sentiment is somewhat modified within the last two years, for it is being realized that the greenkeepers are the real top-sergeants of the golf-course world. Because they are the ones who, figuratively speaking, must lead the men over the top. In other words, it is up to them to deliver the goods.

When the officers were in the rear and the squads were in "No Man's Land" it not infrequently happened that the sergeants opened up and expressed to the men in the ranks, in no uncertain terms, what they really thought of the officers and their policies. One must expect the greenkeepers, under similar conditions to do the same.

Turf Investigators Are Scarce

LIKE the history of any profession, investigations, study and comparison of experience, have developed all callings. Investigators in any line are scarce, but when it comes to turf, they are almost nil. It is not within the sphere of the greenkeepers to make investigations, any more than it would be for a doctor with a large practice—even though they had the technical knowledge to do so—they have not got the time.

The greenkeeper must be like the doctor, big enough to make use of the investigators and technical men, for they are the best friends of any profession. The results of investigations and the latest technique, are passed on to the practical man to put them into effect, and thus, kept up-to-date, and this is what the greenkeeper must do to keep up-to-date. He is then in a position to say to his club—what I am doing is the best known practice for this particular trouble—if you want to call a technical man or one or more other greenkeepers for consultation I am perfectly willing to have them. In any case, it is a wholesome habit for greenkeepers to consult with one another.

During the last five years the greenkeeper has raised himself into a better position than at any time during his chequered career. Seldom is the chairman of the green or the officers of clubs willing to pass on anything in connection with the course without consulting him first. This is due in no small measure, to the feeling of confidence, that has come about since greenkeepers meet each other more often; especially when they find out that their problems are almost identical. This confidence has grown stronger since the formation of the greenkeeper's organizations. But, we must not let ourselves be over-confident, for we are not at the end of our journey, by any means, and never think we know it all. I might relate a little moral. A professor said to his class: "Boys, always be like a green apple, because it is when an apple is ripe that it begins to rot."

Most greenkeepers are picked workers, and many have been promoted from the ranks. It is natural that they should be uneducated in many of the executive problems with which they must deal in their supervisory capacity. Many greenkeepers know in their hearts that they should have more education, but try to make up for this lack by assuming an air of bravado and saying, "book education is not practical," or "These college fellows are too theoretical" or "The university of hard knocks is the real school." It should be clear now how to overcome these disadvantages; if anything is worth having, it is worth fighting for.

Greenkeeping Means More Than Bossing

IN THE old days before the war, if a greenkeeper could talk of poa annua, fescue and creeping bent, hire and fire somebody, and see that plenty of sand was in the tee boxes, he had very little to worry about; but it is known today that a good greenkeeper means vastly more than that. It is recognized that it means more than bossing; and a good greenkeeper must know a lot more than the technique and mechanics of the work done on the golf course. Just because a man has had ten or even twenty years of practical greenkeeping on a course, is no longer to be considered a positive guarantee that he is, or will be a good greenkeeper.

It is now realized that the chief function of greenkeeping is leadership, and the biggest part of his duties has to do with the human element, for all his plans need men to carry them out. It is the efficiency with which this is done that determines the cost at the end of the year. A greenkeeper must consider the cost of upkeep as vital for with modern equipment one can do more work than was ever thought possible. One only has to think back to the single unit fairway cutter—and the great advance made by the triplex—but, who would want to pass through the anxious hours again, of wondering whether the fairways would be done by Saturday, (and only once over at that). Now any of the standard fairway mowers will get over 18 holes twice a week with plenty of time to spare—practically everything else is on the same basis.

Two to three times the amount of work is done on a golf course today as compared with 10 to 15 years ago. Less men are needed than formerly, but each individual produces more, and as a consequence expects and gets greater remuneration, but the greenkeepers' salaries have not advanced in the same proportion, and there is no reason in the world why they should not.

The foregoing discussion and understanding is necessary in order that it may be realized just where the greenkeeper stands. It must be acknowledged that he is the point of immediate contact. He must understand the club's policies and procedures as thoroughly as he needs to understand greenkeeping in all its branches.


The greenkeeper must have a fixed goal or object before he can progress. The object should be a systematic program of education and training. The only way this can be done is through the NATIONAL GREENKEEPERS ASSOCIATION, forming an educational committee with sufficient funds to sponsor a program of training. In order to do this, it is necessary to make the NATIONAL, a truly representative, and co-operative body. With this end in view it is desirable to get the co-operation of men who have had wide experience in related activities.

Course of Training For Greenkeepers

A COURSE of training can be mapped out, and this passed on to every local organization.
(Concluded on page 37)

If you're a Greenkeeper

There are some things you know you need, and many other things you'll want once you find out what they can mean to you, your position, and the Club you're connected with. All of these are shown and described in an attractive book which will be mailed to representative Greenkeepers absolutely without cost, simply upon receipt of their request. If you're sincerely intent on doing a better job, and there are ways of doing it at less cost and with less effort--it's up to you to find out about them right away.

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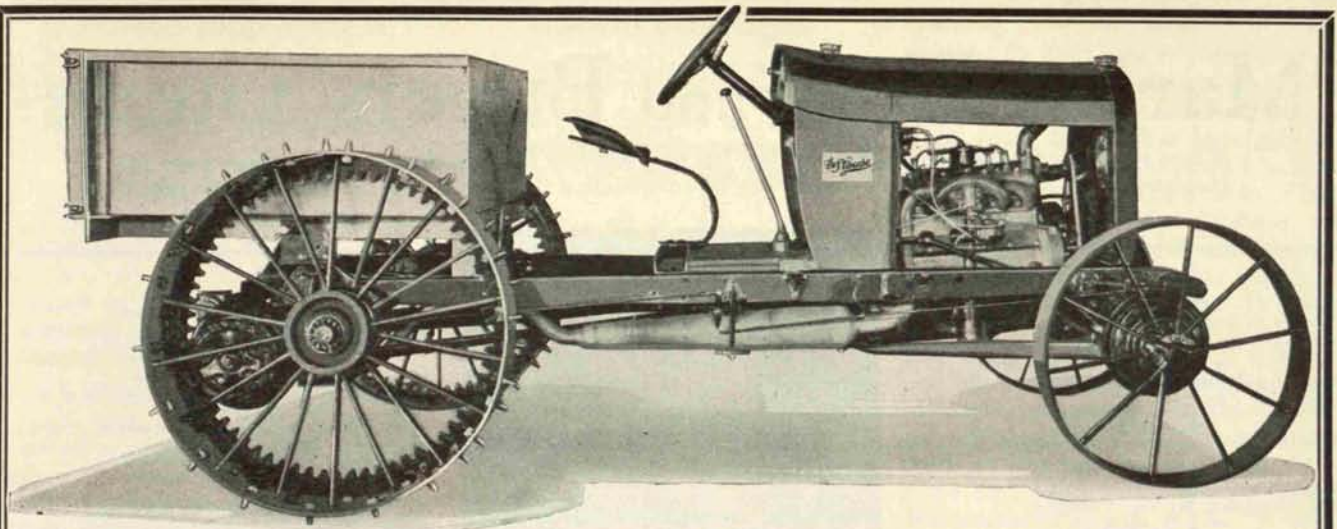
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About the latter part of March I intend to give each putting green 200 pounds and to each green 50 pounds of steamed bone meal. Then when I topdress in May give each green 100 pounds of tobacco dust, eliminating all other fertilizers during the season, except sulphate of ammonia. If this with proper watering does not check disease then I must admit I don't know what will."

One Hundred Million A Year

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zation for their director of lectures to give. In choosing the director of lectures, local organizations should be careful to pick the very best man possible. It is not necessary that he be an inspirational speaker or a high-pressure salesman. It is essential that he be, in every sense of the word a real educator. The word education is derived from two words "duco," to draw, and "e," out, a process of drawing out of the individual what is in him—in other words, stimulate his thinking and reasoning powers.

The only way I can see for the greenkeeper to hold his own in the future, is by joining his local organization, and the National and carry out a program as has been sketched,

with the motto "Unity is strength" floating on our banner.

Bent Grasses in Canada

(Continued from Page 17)

the same height as Rhode Island bent which, to some extent, it also resembles habitually. It produces, however, a much smoother turf and is no doubt the finest of all the bent grasses for lawns and greens. "The Seeds Act, 1923," gives the name *A. canina*. It is not listed in "Standardized Plant Names."

Carpet bent is a bent grass occurring in so-called South German Mixed bent. It produces

"Creeping runners 3 or 5 feet long the first season, making circular mats 5 to 7 feet in diameter, and with relatively few flowering culms. It is by this stoloniferous character that carpet bent is most strikingly distinguished from Rhode Island bent, but the ligules are long and the flowering panicles rather dense." (Piper, 27, pp. 11-12).

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