

The Why Of Poor Fairways

BY JOHN MacGREGOR

Greenkeeper Chicago Golf Club, Wheaton, Ill.

WE HEAR so much these days about poor fairways. Why? The golfer of today wants to play all of his shots from tee to green on his merits. He knows that he is not playing golf when he can go out in July and August and get 350 yds. off the tee, when his legitimate drive is from 200 to 250 yds. He goes around in the low eighties during this period of baked fairways, whereas during the spring and fall when the fairways are slow on account of rains, his game is usually closer to 90.

There are several reasons why 95% of the courses have poor fairways. The main reason is one which is hard to overcome after the course has been constructed, and that is the proper preparation of the fairways prior to seeding. Usually golf courses are constructed on run down or impoverished farm land, and the directors of a newly formed golf club want the construction rushed, resulting in a mediocre course. The only work done on the fairways on such a course is to run a disc over them, throw some seed over and drag.

What can one expect from such procedure? Answer—The same pasture but a little more grass. The lack of money is usually the cause of a poorly constructed 18 hole golf course. Would it not be more economical and satisfactory to build nine well constructed golf holes, than to construct 18 mediocre holes. As the membership increases and money becomes more plentiful, then increase to 18 holes.

False Economy is Poor Economy

FALSE economy is poor economy. To get the best results the preparation of the fairways is very important. A liberal supply of barnyard manure should be spread over the entire fairway, then ploughed under to a depth

of about ten inches.

The fairways should be left in this condition for a month, thus giving the old turf a chance to decompose. Then disc thoroughly, drag, roll or plank, sow the seed on the rolled surface, cultipac and drag to cover the seed, using a chain drag to cover. Do not roll after seeding, then the germination will be more uniform. Rolling has a tendency to bake the soil and the result is a patchy germination.

Another reason for poor fairways is starvation or lack of fertilization. Nature can help only to a certain extent. During the spring and fall the rains supply a slight amount of nitrogen, but when the spring rains are over the nitrogen is cut off. Constant cutting weakens the grass plants.

Many clubs try to improve the condition of the fairways by spending hundreds of dollars on grass seeds, when truthfully half of the seed blows away. The other half germinates but burns up when the hot weather hits it. There usually is enough grass on the fairways if it is properly fed. Then, why not stop wasting money on grass seed,

and spend it on a well balanced fertilizer suitable for the particular soil. \$700.00 worth of fertilizer will go much farther toward improving impoverished fairways than \$400.00 worth of grass seed. Try fertilizing an acre against scattering seed over an acre; the result is obvious.

Close Cutting Hurts Fairways

ANOTHER reason for poor fairways is close cutting. We know a limit has to be made on the length of grass on fairways, nevertheless, the grass should be long enough to form a dense turf. This cannot be done if the grass is cut too short. The longer the grass, the



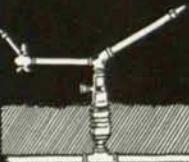
JOHN MACGREGOR



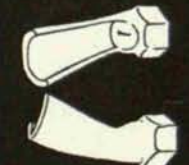
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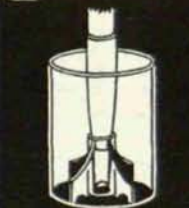


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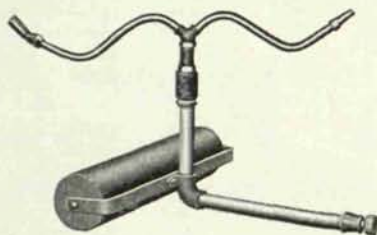
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better the root system. This was ably demonstrated by Mr. Harrison last year during the U. S. G. A. Greens Section meeting at the Chicago experimental turf garden, when he showed the root system of grass cut in different lengths. The first step to take by those who have a mania for close cutting is to raise the mower a notch—the result will be a pronounced improvement.

One more reason for poor fairways is lack of water when it is essential. The best fertilized turf cannot be expected to stay green nor near spring condition without water. Many of the new courses are having a water system installed during construction. Those contemplating a water system should investigate the new hoseless systems which have been installed on several courses during the past two years. There is no question about the merit of such a system.

Fertilization of the fairways is very important and should be a yearly occurrence. I have found that best results are obtained by fertilizing early in the spring, before the grass has started growth.

Minnesota Greenkeepers Meet BY L. J. FESER



CHARLES ERICKSON

THE annual meeting of the Minnesota Greenkeepers Association was held at the Y. M. C. A. at Minneapolis on April 3, 1930. After the boys had taken the weight off of a heavily-laden table and filled the room with enough smoke to obstruct the view of a chairman of a Green committee, they reviewed the high spots of the Louisville convention and discussed ways and means of avoiding bill collectors during the next eleven months.

If our greenkeepers can keep about three holes ahead of those fellows, we are going to charter the Graf Zeppelin and go to Columbus in style. In the meantime there is going to be a little contest known as the National Open over at Interlachen which will be staged the second week in July, and Erich Pahl has managed to arrange for a Greens Section meeting the day before the hostilities begin.

The Association voted to extend a special