



# GREENKEEPING— TODAY *and* TOMORROW

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## CHAPTER X—GREENKEEPING IN 1931 AND PROBABLY 1932

"THE Battle of 1931" or a similar title has attracted those interested in golf course management to several well written articles on the turf "depression" of 1931. These articles together with the replies to Colonel John Morley's questionnaire, have dealt with the difficulties of the greenkeeper, or have related experiences.

The weather, easily blamed of course, was the greatest offender to the growing of healthy turf and the greenkeepers' peace of mind. Poor drainage, brown patch, sod webworm, over-fertilizing, and "scald" each has a group proclaiming it as the champion "evil one." Truly, greenkeepers have had a trying summer, but they have had a job, which fact should compensate in part for their troubles.

The published articles and verbal reports are valuable to read and to be heard. If taken singly or all in one dose, they cause much confusion in the mind of the recipient. (This article may also add to the confusion). The experiences related are contradictory, in whole or in part, and the conditions are so different that when they are discounted with the experiences, still more confusion exists.

To those of us who are sincerely interested in golf course maintenance and have studied the practice of turf culture with an unselfish and open mind, the confusion of ideas exhibited by greenkeepers and Green-chairmen makes us want to shout "I told you so."

### NO SET RULES FOR COURSE MAINTENANCE

GOLF courses cannot be maintained by set rules of cultural practices. Every golf course, and each

tee, fairgreen, rough, and green on every golf course, presents an individual problem, which must be solved by the greenkeeper. This important fact has been the text of the lesson which nature has so forcibly demonstrated. Green committees, Green chairmen, and greenkeepers, to be successful in 1932 must have this lesson well learned.

All kinds of queer cures, and the well-known remedies have affected wonderful results. New theories are being propounded because of these splendid results. When evaluating these results let us remember that many cures were grasped at as a drowning man grasps at any floating object, and that so many cures were tried during the summer that good results, if any, could not be rightfully credited to any one of the numerous cures.

### NORMAL PROGRAM FOR 1932

THE successful greenkeeper in 1932 will not concentrate upon lime, for example, because lime made the grass green in 1931. (Shades of ammonium sulphate). He will practice a conservative and normal fertilizing program. There has been altogether too much of "try this," "try that," without reason or excuse. Uncertainty to the point of confusion is a sure sign of weakness of purpose.

1931 has found many a good greenkeeper handicapped by a confused chairman or Green committee. And, there are some clubs that have suffered the ignominy of having poor greens, because of the confused greenkeeper.

If the greenkeepers and Green chairmen were given hard lessons to learn, what about the club? Have the experiences of 1931 any value, and do they offer a forecast for 1932?



The 1931 golf club budgets were the first to be reduced because of the business depression; few clubs felt any financial strain in 1930. It is interesting to note the varying effect a reduced budget has on the different clubs. Whatever the effect, a lesson has been taught, and we hope, well learned.

#### THE EFFECT OF REDUCED BUDGETS

**R**EDUCED budgets have brought about a closer checking of the greenkeepers' expenditures by the chairmen and the finance committees. This checking has resulted in the failure to approve the expenditures for necessary equipment, supplies, or labor. "Necessary," merely to be economical, because no purchasing meant a lower standard of maintenance, or loss in actual cash. Such checking and false economy has won praise for the chairman who has kept below his budget, but condemnation for the greenkeeper because of inferior turf, and has mortgaged the budget on standard for 1932.

Some clubs maintained (?) their course in 1931 with only workmen enough to perform the routine work. Yet they paid the greenkeeper the same salary they did in 1930. Poor business management either way you look at it. Golf courses cannot be maintained to a given standard by routine work, and if all that is required is routine work, why pay a greenkeeper when a straw boss would cost less and be more in keeping with the job?

No thinking individual feels that greenkeepers are overpaid, but the mind that orders nothing but routine work and proceeds to boss it with a high overhead, is certainly inconsistent. The wise clubs in 1932 will not keep their courses by routine only. The greenkeeper will earn his salary as a boss, a superintendent, and for his ability to grow good turf. The club continuing with the routine work will find itself by the fall of 1932, with a physically poor golfing plant.

One splendid lesson has been forced upon the never satisfied clubs. Without funds to make alterations, the old course had to be played as is, and with few exceptions the members are pleased, even happy, not to have to play over "ground under preparation" or "green out of play use temporary." Because there were no alterations to distract the greenkeepers' attention or to which to divert their funds, the old course was in the "best shape it ever had been." That club (and others) if wise, will in 1932 let well enough alone.

#### GOLF IS CLUB'S GREATEST ASSET

**I**931 has called the attention to a number of clubs that golfing is essential to the financial health, even life, of the club. Men do not give up golf when they resign from private clubs, they play public and semi-public courses. Many of these latter courses offer excellent golfing, under acceptable conditions, and for the \$100 membership golfer, at a very low cost.

The 1932 golf clubs that have a low standard of course maintenance, and high membership dues, will lose members to the freedom and variety of public courses. As home town merchants must give reasonable satisfaction to hold their trade from going to other communities, so must the home club give reasonable playing conditions to hold its membership.

Many of the clubs because of the trying conditions of 1931 have learned the true worth of their greenkeeper, and the Green committee. To know such a value is worth all of the summer's experiences, whether the value is high or low. In 1932 there will be a better disposition of the greenkeeping forces, fewer misfits will be in evidence, and real greenkeepers will become safely established.

#### EXPERTS AGGRAVATE COURSE DIFFICULTIES

**E**VERYONE who is interested should have learned by the experiences of 1931 that "experts" are of a variable degree of use. The writer is firmly convinced that "experts" have greatly aggravated the difficulties of 1931. In fact in some instances they are responsible for much of the trouble.

1931 saw the start of "racketeering" in golf course maintenance. It was to be expected, because of the great popularity of the game, so that the opportunity for personal gain by racketeering methods is great. Much could be written about "experts" and expert advice. In fact an hours' lecture could be delivered.

In 1932 this so-called "racketeering" will either gain a tremendous momentum or be strangled to its death. Which it is, depends upon whether the clubs' officials and greenkeepers have been seeing or merely looking.

To this conservative old New Englander, who has not underrated the difficulties of 1931, and is far from being alarmed over expected troubles in 1932, the past season has been one that has fully



exposed the structure of golf turf maintenance and golf club management. The sound timbers have held, and the weak ones have broken, and in spite of all, golf as a game has increased in popularity. 1931 has been a "blessing in disguise." The real greenkeeper or well-managed club has nothing to fear for the future, but nature and green grass must help the others.

## Brown Patch for First Time

By C. L. BLUETT, *Greenkeeper,*  
*Glen Mawr Golf and Country Club,*  
*Toronto, Canada*

**I**N RESPONSE to Col. John Morley's questionnaire, I am glad to relate for the benefit of others interested, the experiences I have had during the year 1931.

1.—*Did your turf become infested with webworm? If so, what treatment did you apply, and what results if any did you observe?*

We were fortunate in not finding it necessary to combat webworm.

2.—*Was your turf affected with large or small brown patch? If not and you did not use any mercury compounds as a preventative, what methods did you use in the way of fertilization?*

Yes. Four of our greens became badly affected with brown patch. To combat this I used mercury compound, which proved an effective cure.

This is the first time during my experience as a greenkeeper that brown patch has affected my greens.

I am of the opinion that climatic conditions are a primary factor in the development of this disease of the turf.

3.—*Do you omit using organic fertilizers during the summer months?*

4.—*Do you think that over-feeding or over-watering hastens fungus diseases?*

I do not think that watering has as much to do with the disease as organic fertilizers. This conclusion was reached because of the following experience.

We have 18 greens on a course recently constructed. On the 10 holes in play this spring, 4 greens were affected with brown patch. As stated above mercury compound successfully cured this.

On these same 10 greens I used organic fertilizer and found that it grew a weak surface turf which is subject to fungus disease.

On the remaining 8 greens, I did not use organic fertilizers. In the early spring these 8 greens were top-dressed with a preparation of sulphate of ammonia, 4 lbs. per 1000 square feet, mixed with about 2 yards of compost consisting of 33 1/3% sharp sand, loam and manure.

These greens were treated twice during the summer months with a commercial preparation of 4-12-6, and were watered regularly during the day-time.

Throughout the summer these 8 greens showed a heavy matted turf with roots descending from 2 to 3 inches and remained in a very healthy condition.

5.—*Have you observed various diseases on greens that have been dried out for the lack of water and appear to receive plenty of air?*

No.

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