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# The NATIONAL GREENKEEPER

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## How We Sod Greens In Pittsburgh

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**T**HE Pittsburgh method of sodding a putting green was originated by Emil Loeffler of Oakmont Country Club a good many years ago. At least that is what I have heard and he was the first one to use it that I know of.

It differs from most methods as the sod is handled in larger pieces than most other methods, thereby saving time and having less joints. I have successfully sodded about twenty greens by this method and have had wonderful results every time and have opened them up for play within two weeks from the time we started to lift the sod.

The sod bed is prepared in the usual way having a good layer of topsoil and about two inches of screened soil or compost on top of this. The green should be thoroughly rolled to compact the surface and then carefully scraped with the back of a rake or a scraper made for this job. The secret of a true surface depends on the rolling and the scraping. The surface should be as true as the

finished green to secure the best results. All little humps and hollows should be cut off or filled and a final rolling given the green.

### CUTTING THE SOD

**T**HE next step is cutting the sods. For this purpose I use an English-type turf edger. A steel plate ten by forty-eight inches is used as a pattern and the man who does the cutting must follow this plate exactly to secure sods of even dimensions. The plate is about  $\frac{3}{32}$  of an inch thick or just thick enough to have plenty of stiffness.

The sod is lifted with a regular turf lifter and is cut about two inches thick. This allows for trimming. The sod is slid onto another steel plate and carried to the trimming box where it is shaved to a thickness of one and a half inches. This box is eleven by fifty inches, inside measurements. A table can be made about the right height to accommodate the trimmers while trimming the sods.



PREPARING THE SOD BED



CUTTING AND LIFTING THE SOD





LIFTING SOD ONTO STEEL PLATE TO CARRY TO TRIMMERS



TRIMMING SOD TO ONE THICKNESS

The knives are made out of old fairway unit bottom knives. They should be ground off to a sharp edge and a handle made on both ends to resemble a draw knife. The sod is placed dirt up in the box and a trimmer on both ends works out on it. The result is a sod 10x48x1½ inches. All the same size and all the same thickness.

#### LAYING THE SOD

**T**HE sod is turned out onto a one-inch board and carried or hauled to the green. By lay-



LAYING SOD

*Note Board on Which Sod Was Carried*

ing a row of sods through the center of the green and then working on both sides of this row it is as easy as laying bricks on the ground. The joints

should be broken so that no two seams come together. It is easily seen now the importance of having a true surface to lay the sods on as they are all one thickness and the resulting job will be true and level.

If a topsoil is used that has the proper mechanical condition, as soon as it is watered it will immediately take hold of the sod and knit together very fast.

After the sod is laid, the joints are all gone over and a mixture of compost and sand is placed on each crack. At least half sand should be used as it seems to bind better and has the tendency to get into the joints better.

The men laying the sod walk and work on boards so as to not disturb the surface of the ground. A medium watering follows the crack filling and as soon as it gets into the soil the sod is tamped lightly using a plank to tamp on. Another watering follows the tamping and after setting for a while the rolling begins.

Several medium rollings are better than a few heavy ones. In about a week, a heavy roller may be used but this is seldom necessary if the surface has been properly prepared and the sod carefully handled.



FILLING THE CRACKS WITH COMPOST



THE GREEN ABOUT COMPLETED