

Early Summer Work on the Golf Course

In these war times, when the question of food saving is up to every one of us and the farmer is asked to do his utmost to get all he can out of the land, may I just suggest that golf clubs might be able to help out a little also in the way of food production. It is a well-known fact that many golf clubs have ploughed up all land outside the course and raised potatoes, etc., in this way helping out the country's food production. But I think it possible for them to go a little further in this way and by grazing sheep on the courses keep down their wage bill and at the same time help out on the food question still more.

To any one of an observant character and who visits the various courses, and instead of having his mind entirely fixed on the game he will notice, especially at this time of year, the number of weeds that have sprung up, especially on the fairways. Putting greens and tees it is possible to keep free from weeds, but the fairways are another problem. The continual mowing necessary to keep the turf in condition for play naturally keeps the many weeds from going to seed. They are still there, however, and yearly getting stronger and choking out the grass. Now I have always maintained that sheep on a golf course are a great benefit, as they keep down the grass to a certain extent, and

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where the weeds have established themselves in former years they will quickly disappear if sheep are allowed to get at them. I have always, as I have said, been a firm believer in sheep on a golf course, and at the present time am more so. They may do some little damage, but this is counterbalanced manyfold by their work on the fairways in keeping down the grass and also in getting rid of the weeds.

This question of grazing sheep on the course may also become a source of revenue to the club as it is a well known fact that sheep fatten much more rapidly on a golf course than they do on an ordinary farm meadow. Therefore, I say, a club might do worse at the present time than have a few sheep grazing on the links.

As I said in my preceding article we have had little or no spring and growth thereby has been backward. It is just possible that a warm, dry spell may set in and add to the greenkeeper's difficulties. His first thoughts when this occurs is to make preparations for applying water. At this time of year the nights and mornings are cold and the application of water might do more harm than good if not applied at the right time. Where artificial watering has to be resorted to I suggest it be done in the early afternoon and late morning. The sun has a stronger heat power and as the ground has not yet got properly warmed up, so to speak, the water if applied at this time will not have the same chance to chill the grass plants.

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In the height of summer, of course, it is best to water night times. It does more good and is safer. I have already said something in regard to watering but it may not be out of place to just warn those in charge against the common habit of "sprinkling" the greens. This "sprinkling" is a fatal mistake and assuredly sooner or later will lead the greenkeeper into trouble.

As I have already said, if watering is necessary, owing to an exceptionally dry spell, thoroughly soak the ground and not merely wet the surface. If this is done it will be found that once, or perhaps twice a week is often enough to apply water. The common system of watering, or "sprinkling" almost every day is entirely wrong and should be discontinued if the grass is to be kept in a strong healthy condition, after the severe winter we have lately passed through the last few weeks have shown up the places on the greens, tees and fairways that have suffered from the excessive cold weather. Many of those spots which the greenkeeper took a chance on coming around with the advent of growing weather, have failed to come up to expectations and other and more drastic measures have to be resorted to and very probably the greenkeeper has to take the bull by the horns and returf all of these places. On most courses it is seldom one comes across any sign of anything being done in the way of providing for such contingencies and when it does take place the greenkeeper is at his wits end to get out. All intelligent greenkeepers and green com-

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mittees have always a turf nursery at hand to meet these occasions and can get to work and fix things up right away. However, where this essential has been overlooked, or neglected, those in charge have to find some way out. Turf must be put in to correspond as nearly as possible with the existing turf on the green, so that an even texture and a true surface is established all over the green. One of the worst things that can happen is to have a putting green with the patches of all kinds of grasses or turf mixed up. It is an utter impossibility for the player to judge the strength of the green under such conditions. He may have to putt over a section of the green where several fine, smooth patches of turf are, and in between them sections of turf of a coarser character. The player is to be pitied where those conditions prevail, as he may throw away several strokes on such a green, no matter how well he may have played to reach it. Well, when a putting green requires "patching" because of the turf dying out from some cause or other, my method for rectifying, and putting to rights this state of affairs is this: I go to the back of the putting green, or the sides, and I take the turf from that section, and after cutting out the old and dead turf, I place the turf I have removed from the back or the sides in its place. It may seem almost a sacrilege to do this work in this way, but it is the best and the only way to get satisfactory results. What I mean is, that I have no fear of the turf "taking" and thriving as the turf taken from

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the same green has been nurtured on the same soil and conditions as the other parts of the green, therefore it has a better chance to thrive. Let me explain briefly what I mean. I have seen first class turf brought from some other parts of the links to returf wornout places on putting greens situated on another and distant part of the course. Every care and attention was bestowed by the greenkeeper, or those in charge to see that it was properly put in. For a short time it would show signs of doing all right. Eventually, however, it began to show unmistakable proofs that all was not right and various methods were tried to nurse it on. All the attention, however, could not induce it to grow in a healthy way, and eventually it became necessary to again returf.

The second time the greenkeeper might be lucky it chance was his way for the simple reason he may have got the turf for the renovating from some other part of the course where the soil was similar to that on which it was desired to carry out the operations of re-turfing. It is a good part common sense as it is quite impossible to gain the desired results if the conditions of the soil, situation, etc., are absolutely different. The putting green to be renovated may be, for instance, situated on a low part of the course where, perhaps the soil may be of a heavy nature, so that turf, if taken from some other part where the soil is of a lighter character it will not thrive so well and will in time eventually die out.

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The same holds good in regard to turf taken from light sandy soil and placed on heavy. Therefore, it behooves the greenkeeper to see that the conditions are as near similar as possible, in regard to where he is taking his turf from and to where it is to be placed. If he follows out the idea of taking his turf from the green itself, unless, of course, patching on a large scale has to be resorted to, he will have little or no trouble with the turf he has placed in the green. In place of the turf he has removed for patching, he has only to go to the side of the fairway against the green, and pick some good turf to fill up.

It will certainly be a little rough at first but with care and attention it will soon work in, and eventually it will not be noticeable from the other parts of the green.