

Summer Work on the Golf Course

In my last article I gave a few hints as to the work confronting the greenkeeper in the early summer months.

In this I will try to explain the work that will confront him at this time of year, and a few hints as to the best way of doing it. In my preceding article I went into the question of watering and also of weeds, in a general way.

Now in recent years a weed has appeared and has given the greenkeeper great anxiety, in the first place as to how it got into the greens, and secondly the best means to get rid of it. I, myself, had great trouble in combating it, and spent quite a long time in experimenting in many different ways to find out the best way to kill it out.

I have never been a believer in using poison in any shape or form in killing out weeds.

At this time of year, if there should be any weeds in the putting greens they will now be showing. Plantains, dandelions, and all top rooted weeds should be removed by hand, and as the roots of these go down a long way great care must be exercised in their removal, otherwise if any part of the root is left, in nine cases out of ten, they will shoot again. A good plan is to remove them when the ground is moist as the green-

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keeper has a much better chance to get the whole plant.

The weed that I am about to mention, a few years ago was practically unknown, but has now become very general on many golf courses. I can remember not so many years ago when it was practically unknown. The weed is "pearlwort." To anyone who is not acquainted with it, at first look it is very difficult to observe, as it has the appearance of very fine grass. Soft in texture and growing in a thick mat, it looks splendid, as it is of a rich green color.

Even in the driest weather it retains its color. When it gets a firm hold on a green, it will most assuredly in a very short time overcome the grass and kill it out entirely. As I have already said, this weed has only of late made its appearance, and opinions differ as to how it has got in.

I am of the opinion that the watering of the greens has a lot, if not all, to do with it. In my observations, which I have made very carefully, from time to time, and in different localities, I noticed that on putting greens where artificial watering had not been resorted to, or reduced to a minimum, the absence of the weed was very apparent, whereas on greens where watering had been carried out during a dry spell, it had made its appearance, and was spreading to an alarming extent. I have had it said to me when I was at work killing it out, why bother with it, the surface plays all right and it looks splendid to the eye.

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This may be all right from the player's point of view at the time, and where it is only in small patches it may not appear to matter much. However, when it is allowed to spread disaster must assuredly follow.

Well, as to its appearance, my idea as to its presence is caused by the greenkeeper himself to a very great extent from the fact that when applying the water, he simply sprinkled the surface, instead of soaking the green thoroughly. I am strongly of opinion I am about right in regard to the appearance of this weed.

Let me here state that if a small spot appears in a putting green, in a very short space of time it will be through the whole of it. There may be other reasons for its appearance, but I feel sure the one I have pointed out is the principal one. Now, supposing the greenkeeper should be faced with the problem of getting rid of this weed should it have made its appearance, he has to set about and find some way of getting rid of his enemy.

Should he be of an observant nature, on its first appearance he will most likely cut it out and put in a fresh sod. Where it has, however, got a firm hold and it is absolutely impossible to cut it out, without cutting out the entire green, other means has to be resorted to.

I think I have tried every means I can think of to combat it and effectually kill it out without putting the green out of commission, and the following treatment I have found to work the best:

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The very first thing to do is to keep the water away from it. Do not water the green at all. Let it burn up, the turf won't die out, even if it should get brown. When it has burned up and a dry spell is on, put on plenty of lime and rub it well into the pearlwort. As soon as one dressing is out of sight apply another and if it should be necessary a third. The lime will help the grass, but will kill the weed, and after the first shower of rain the turf will come again, but the enemy has become sick and will gradually die out. Should there be any left in the green in fall after this treatment, it will be found that the following spring it will be gone altogether after the frosts of the winter. I have been called foolish in regard to my treatment of this weed and told that the only effectual way to get rid of it, is to cut it out and replace with fresh turf. May I be allowed to point out to anyone who wishes to see for himself that my ideas are right, if he will take the trouble of looking at the putting greens at Garden City.

Two years ago when I took over charge of them there was not one but what had "pearlwort" to a greater or lesser amount. I started in one the course of treatment I have pointed out and today they are clear of it. One green in particular was exceptionally bad—No. 16. It was practically nothing else but "pearlwort" and the only remedy appeared to be, to either returf or seed down.

I, however, got busy and have effectually killed it

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out. What little was left in the fall was in a weak state, and the winter's frosts did the rest. So much for "pearlwort," its cultivation and extermination.

There is another weed of a shallow rooted and creeping nature and one very common on many putting greens. Where it is allowed to spread it will soon assert itself and quickly take command.

I do not hesitate to say that it is as bad, if not worse, than "pearlwort." It looks far worse and is more noticeable. It spreads like wildfire during the summer months, and where there may possibly be some grass plants left where the former weed has been, in the case of the one I am about to mention, the grass is entirely killed out. It is much more noticeable and looks worse and at the same time makes putting more uncertain. The weed I mean is mouse-eared "chickweed." Like "pearlwort," he seems to be continually in flower, or seeding. The treatment he has got to have must be more drastic than the one given to "pearlwort." It will be found that he grows in bunches, or clumps. Like my other enemy I have tried many ways of getting rid of him, but I have come to the conclusion that the best and most effectual one is to cut him out entirely and replace with a fresh sod. Some rake him out, but this process leaves a bare, and unsightly spot in the green and even though it should be seeded and topdressed, it takes some considerable time for the place to heal up. Lime, if applied, will

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also kill it out, but I have the same objection to using it, as I have to raking it out.

The presence of this weed in the green is largely due to the system of "sprinkling" indulged in, as with the "pearlwort." Being a shallow, or surface-rooted weed, if the surface is not properly "soaked" so that the water reaches the roots of the grass the "chickweed" thrives and spreads, and where there were only one, or small spots of it in the green, if this continual "sprinkling" is persevered in those spots will grow very quickly, and the seed throw out fresh patches. Whenever weeds appear something is wrong, and it behooves the greenkeeper to see to the cause and remedy it. In my opinion, the foregoing are the causes of the appearance of the two weeds I have mentioned and I feel sure my remedy is the safest and best, at least, I have found them so.

There is another weed, grass you can call it, if you like, which makes its appearance about this time of year, but is at its height a little later on in the season. I have seen greens one week looking perfect, and perhaps the next entirely full of it.

I had not met it until I came to this country, as it is unknown on the other side of the Atlantic. When I found myself up against this enemy, I of course had to make war against him.

I found out that if care was taken he could be easily kept under, even although he was not entirely killed out. He seems to grow in a night, and thrives in any

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sort of weather. This is "Crab—or Summer Grass."

In my next chapter I will start by giving my ideas of how it should be treated to keep it under control.