

Midsummer Work on the Golf Course

In my preceding article I dealt with "Pearlwort," as also with "Chickweed," the cause of them appearing in the green and also the best means of getting rid of them. At this time of year all sorts of weeds make their appearance, perhaps not in the putting greens themselves, maybe in the "rough" alongside the fairways and also 'round the greens. These weeds, if allowed to seed, will cause the greenkeeper no end of trouble, as, if blown about by the wind, they will most assuredly find their way eventually into the greens. Some of the lighter varieties of the seeds blow a long distance. Therefore, I maintain that the greenkeeper should see that the weeds are cut down often enough so that they have no chance to seed, ripen and blow all over the course.

Dandelions and plantains should be removed by hand, care being taken to get the whole roots. All weeds are the common enemy of the greenkeeper and he is, or should be, constantly at war with them. In the latter part of July or the beginning of August, a weed makes its appearance, all at once, in fact almost in one night. Until I came to this country I had never seen it, as I had not met it in Europe, although I had heard a lot about it from men I had sent out here to look after courses. This is summer grass. It spreads at an alarming extent and if not tackled as soon as it

CARE OF THE GREEN

makes its appearance will soon gain complete mastery and choke out the fine grasses. It seems to come up from nowhere and is a puzzle. It is next to impossible to kill it out, so the greenkeeper has to set about doing something to fight it. Having a broad, coarse leaf it very quickly "dulls" up a fine fast putting service if allowed to gain the mastery. I have tried several methods to combat the pest and the one I have so far found to give the best results is a system of raking the green where he has made his appearance.

What I mean is this: Get a good half-worn iron rake with sharp teeth. Rake the green all over so as to get the leaves of the grass standing on end. When this has been done take a good sharp mower, with a half-worn sole plate, so that it can be set as low as possible, to cut the grass low. The lower the mower is set the better. If this is done two or three times this enemy will give little or no trouble for the rest of the season. I find if this work is carried out that as well as keeping it under so that the finer grasses have a chance, a thicker carpet of turf will have been retained for the late autumn play. If allowed to hold sway and no effort is made to keep it in check the green must assuredly suffer, and when it disappears in the fall, a thin, sickly carpet of grass will be left in its place. It seems to thrive in any kind of soil, and under all kinds of conditions, wet or dry. Some others may have different, and perhaps better, ways of dealing with this

CARE OF THE GREEN

pest, but this is the one so far I have found to be the most satisfactory.

VIII We are now in the time of year when the greenkeeper is kept busy, what with weeding, watering and mowing. I mean this is the most trying time of the year for the greenkeeper, as a lot depends on his skill in fighting the many difficulties confronting him.

He has, if the dry spell lasts long, to see that the watering is carried out in a judicious manner. To see that the water is applied at the proper time, and also the right amount given each green—fairways, if he is lucky enough to have a system for watering them—as also the tees. Now it appears to me that if artificial watering has to be resorted to, especially for any length of time should a dry spell last, the grass plants must get somewhat weaker. They would be practically lying dormant during the dry weather if they were not artificially watered. I also maintain that by this means of watering them, artificially, the grass is kept by a forced growth under circumstances which are, to say the least, not natural. Well, my contention is this: Where grass, for any length of time is kept growing under the above conditions, it must surely of necessity grow weaker from this unnatural treatment, and if means are not taken to counteract this, the grass must suffer in condition and quality.

Therefore, where I am forced to apply water, artificially, for any length of time, I make it a point to see that the grass plants get fed from time to time so as to

CARE OF THE GREEN

give them nourishment and keep them strong, hardy and healthy. This appears to me to be only common sense. I have an idea there would not be so many greens affected by winter^e kill, if this scheme was followed, as by keeping the grass strong and healthy it would then be in better condition physically to withstand the extreme cold weather of the winter months.

Artificial watering during the dry summer months without nourishment of some kind must assuredly weaken the grass. I have already, in a former article, dealt with the system of watering I consider best for the grass, namely, to soak the ground well, not just sprinkle. Other work has also to be seen to at this time of the year. Autumn will soon be on us and the greens will have to get a topdressing of something or other so as to put some "life" into them for the late autumn play, as also for the coming cold winter weather. In his spare time, if he is a thoughtful greenkeeper, he will see that his compost heap is turned over so as to have it good and fryable for putting through the screen before applying it to the greens. He might even be applying some of it to his greens now and watering it in to advantage, as I have just pointed out. He could also get busy building another heap for use later. Should he have enough spare ground he will see that he gets some hay from it to help out during the winter, in fact he has a hundred and one things to keep him busy at this time.

Where there is a lot of mowing and a great many

CARE OF THE GREEN

mowers are in use to keep the grass down, there is always something going wrong and this he has to see to sometimes after his day's work is, or should be done. Speaking of mowers, let me just mention in passing that I do not believe in the idea of letting the grass grow long during a dry spell, but on the contrary I believe and recommend that the grass be mown as low as possible in all sorts of weather. Keep it short is my motto, at all times, whether in wet weather or during a dry spell. As I have said in a previous article, I am a firm believer in the use of lime and I find a dressing applied at this time of year, well watered in, of great benefit to the grass plants.

I have at all times been a firm believer in the use of natural manures. I may be called a bit old-fashioned, perhaps, in regard to my stand here, but I am a firm and staunch disciple of the use of the old compost heap and would recommend a dressing being applied now. It is a good plan to keep putting on a little at a time occasionally. Just a slight dressing, not to interfere with the play. I find this to work out well, and have always carried this plan out.

In my next article I will deal with some of the work which it is necessary to carry out for the early fall apart from what I have already mentioned, and also give a general view of the work on the golf course from time to time. In my previous articles I have tried to give an idea of what should be done at the time of the year in which I was writing.