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INFORMATION PLEASE

by Alexander M. Radko
Eastern Director, USGA Green Section

May we help? How often has this been said in sincerity, no matter what your station in life or vocation? Golfers are no exception, and they too are willing to do most anything that will help keep the course in fine playing condition. After all this is their course, their pride and joy, and they truly get enjoyment from guest praise, just as you and I do, who are concerned with turfgrass management.

Last month while visiting clubs in the Cleveland area, discussions with the superintendent and green committee led to the observation that long tees are seldom used. They are seldom used because members prefer to gain as much advantage as possible when playing a course. However, if they knew that this advantage leads to turf problems, then they would react differently. Most would readily say, "If it's good for the course, it's O.K. with me!" We who know a little about turfgrasses know that it must be used to stay healthy. We all have observed mounded areas, slopes, terraces, and other such areas on greens that are not cupped; here bentgrasses become very thatchy and very much a management problem. Tees react the same way when not used, and they become susceptible to all problems concerned with thatch. This past winter where **desiccation** occurred, thatched areas were harder hit than areas with little thatch. Thatch causes grass roots to become shallow and unthrifty — in every day terms, JUST PLAIN LAZY — they grow laterally through the heavy thatch, they

don't work to penetrate the soil . . . why should they when they can grow so easily in thatch.

During adversity weaknesses are quick to show, and one of the weaknesses is caused by not using some portions of the turf and overusing others. Therefore why not spread the wear around. Tell your members why they should be using all the turf, and I'm sure you will be surprised at their cooperative response. They will do it if they know why, so provide this information, spread the turf gospel. You know it, they don't, so it's up to you to educate your playing members.

Northern Ohio Turfgrass News

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