

COLLAR MAINTENANCE

Dr. James B. Beard describes a collar in his recent book **Turf Management for Golf Courses** as "the narrow turfed strip surrounding the putting green that is mowed at a height intermediate between the height of the fairway and that of the putting green." That height of cut usually ranges anywhere from 3/8 to 3/4 of an inch depending on turf type and intensity of maintenance.

It has been my experience that this "narrow turfed strip" can be more of a problem to maintain in a healthy state than any turf on the golf course. The root of the problem so to speak is a shallow root system. For various reasons, the population of *Poa Annua* in the collar is very high. Contributing factors are injury caused by turning of greens mowers, triplex or hand and golfers entering and exiting a green in approximately the same area. In addition, the *Hyperodes Weevil* seems to be the most devastating in the collar areas. Unless proper cultural practices are followed for the entire growing season, trying to maintain collars can be an exercise in futility.

During the course of the growing season there can be any number of valid reasons for not performing the routine maintenance tasks that would produce quality collars. They can range from a limited operating budget and lack of help to pressure from golfers to have the green area in play as quickly as possible. Weather conditions can often times be a limiting factor. With all the problems associated with maintaining collars, you need to be extremely determined to have quality turfgrass in the collar area.

The first step in any program would be a late spring aerification in order to encourage root development. In our area you should try to do this aerification in early May. Our best results have occurred when we were able to follow-up aerification with a little seed topdressing. If weather conditions and golfing pressures allow, you might consider this process again in early to mid June and again in late August.

Other considerations would have to be proper timing and use of pesticides and the proper use of wetting agents. Anything that can be done to encourage a healthy root system will pay big dividends when your turf comes under stress in July and August. It is absolutely essential that all pesticide applicators are properly trained and they realize the importance of continuing their green application right through the collar area.

With today's watering system designs it is impossible to adequately water the collar area and not over-water the putting surface. If you are ever involved in the design and installation of an irrigation system, you might consider a separate row of smaller sprinkler heads around the green capable of watering only the collar area. This is a very inexpensive option when compared to the total price of an irrigation system.

It has been said that collars require the same intensity of maintenance as putting greens. I disagree. They require more maintenance than a putting green. But with a lot of determination and a solid maintenance program you can have quality turfgrass on that "narrow turfed strip".

Credit-"Our Callaborator" Peter J. Salinetti, CGCS
10/83

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Pennsylvania Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, West Chocolate Avenue & University Drive, Hershey, PA. Contact: Christine E. King, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, 412 Blanchard Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823. (814) 355-8010.

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