

“Fall Fertilization”

by Alex Binnie, Greenkeeper

Shoreacres Golf Club, Lake Bluff, IL, and Chairman of the Editorial Council of the National Greenkeeper

In my opinion, any budget that fails to provide for an annual appropriation for fairway fertilization is incomplete. It is essential for the proper maintenance of any golf course. The plan which we have adopted, our reasons and methods for the application of fertilizers, and the results which we have obtained are outlined below.

In the first place, I am a firm believer in fall fertilization. It has many advantages over spring fertilization or haphazard methods. I might enumerate a few:

FIRST — Maintenance work is at its lowest in the fall as compared with the spring or summer months and fertilizing can be done with labor that would otherwise represent idle time.

From an economical standpoint the plan is ideal.

SECOND — More hardy growth is developed. Fall fertilizers will, as a rule, stimulate the root system without promoting abnormal growth, to the extent that there is less winter kill. The real benefit, however, comes when the frost and the rain dissolve the fertilizers and work them deeper into the soil, thereby encouraging a deeper and more hardy root system rather than a shallow turf which is an inevitable result when fertilizers are on top of the soil rather than in it.

THIRD — And last, bad spots on the fairways are apparent and are sure to receive attention in the fall, whereas, some are apt to be forgotten in the spring.

As I mentioned before, our plan contemplates an annual appropriation for fairway fertilization. We do not attempt to fertilize all fairways in any one year, but rather to cover a few each year, never overlooking any spot on the entire course that is not up to standard even though it is necessary to treat it each season.

And also we do not broadcast fertilizers with a prayer on our lips. The fairways are disced and rediscd and the fertilizers worked well into the soil.

The results which we have obtained have been very satisfactory. We have good fairways — no winter kill — our turf has a splendid root system — and our grasses are hardy. Our fairways are cut three times each week. Why shouldn't I believe in fall fertilization?

Editor's Comments: The above was sent to me by Bob Williams, who sent me a photo copy from the September 1931 issue of "The National Greenkeeper, The Leading Journal of the World on Turf Culture and Golf Course Maintenance." It is too bad that the pictures that went along with the article could not be reproduced.



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