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Greenkeeper, Golf's Forgotten Man

By William F. Steedman

The feats of golf's anointed in the enlightened age
Are spread with care meticulous upon the printed
page.

We read of Pro and Champion—and of some less-
gifted chaps

Who break into the 60s (with the aid of handicaps),
But it's really quite unlikely that you'd recognize
the name

Of one who does as much as they to help along
the game.

I mean the guy who grows the grass, — the man
behind the scenes,

That unobtrusive character — the Keeper of the Greens.

He needs a milder temper than the meekest of the
saints.

The only time he hears from us are when he hears
complaints:

The pins are here instead of there; the rough's too
rough, and oft

The greens at once are far too fast, too slow, too hard,
too soft.

His name is mentioned only when we put him on
the pan —

When cheers are being handed out, he's Golf's
Forgotten Man.

How often do we pause to think, when we espy our
pill

Perched neatly on the velvet turf, of all the toil
and skill

That put the emerald carpet there? Not often, sirs.
But when

The ball is in a divot-hole, that's something else again.
Where is that dot-dash greenkeeper, is what we
want to know.

We'd like to tell him off, but good, the (censored)
so-and-so,

Forgetting that the cavity that's causing all the fuss
Was dug, say, half an hour ago by somebody like us.
For whatsoever circumstance our feelings may annoy
We blame the Keeper of the Greens — he's golfdom's
Whipping Boy.

Though you think the G. K.'s duties don't require a
mind too bright,

In things that we know little of he's really erudite.
Of matters biochemical a lot he has to know:

What fertilizers best will help the tortured grass
to grow;

What dope most likely will persuade the fairway
weeds to die;

How much he should nitrogenize his fescues and
his bents;

How to kill mosquito batches and caterpillar tents.
He looks like any field hand in his corduroys or jeans,
But he's something of a scientist, the Keeper of the
Greens.

He's enough of a mechanic, too, to keep in good repair
Equipment that's subjected to the rugged wear
and tear

Of mowing ninety acres of uneven, tough terrain,
O'er rocks and roots and stump-holes, in sun and
snow and rain.

His pumps he must maintain in shape to keep the
pressure high.

Lest sprinklers stop a-sprinkling and precious
grasses die.

Long hours he spends a-tink'ring with his gadgets
and his gear

Far from the captious members' ken, golf's Unsung
Engineer.

Before the sun's first level rays strike o'er the
dewy lea

He's sweeping greens, or raking traps, or marking
off each tee,

But you seldom run across him, for he keeps out
of your way

For fear he might commit the crime of interrupting
play.

Apart from human contacts he spends his toilsome
days,

A man whom there are few to know, and fewer
still to praise.

Still, as you proudly view, or stride across those
verdant scenes,

Just think, where would you be without the Keeper
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Grass

From the Collaborator

Grass is the Forgiveness of Nature—Her Constant Benediction. Fields trampled with battle, saturated with blood, torn with the ruts of cannon, grow green again with grass, and carnage is forgotten. Streets abandoned by traffic become grass-grown like rural lanes, and are obliterated. Forests decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish, but grass is immortal. . . Be-leaguered by the sullen hosts of winter, it withdraws into the impregnable fortress of its subterranean vitality, and emerges upon the first solicitation of Spring. Sown by the winds, by wandering birds, propagated by the subtle horticulture of the elements, which are its ministers and servants, it softens the rude outline of the world. . . Its tenacious fibers hold the earth in place and prevent soluble components from washing into the wasting sea. It invades the solitude of deserts, climbs the inaccessible slopes and forbidding pinnacles of mountains, modifies climates and determines the history, character and destiny of nations. . . unobtrusive and patient, it has immortal vigor and aggression. Banished from the thoroughfare and the field, it bides its time to return, and when vigilance is relaxed, or the dynasty has perished, it silently resumes the throne from which it has been expelled, but which it never abdicates. . . . It bears no blazonry or bloom to charm the senses with fragrance or splendor, but its homely hue is more enchanting than the lily or the rose. It yields no fruit in earth or air, and yet should its harvest fail for a single year, famine would depopulate the world.

—John James Ingalls

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WILL BIRCH TREES GO THE WAY OF THE ELM?

Birch trees are some of the most beautiful plants available for gardeners in Chicagoland.

Sadly, these magnificent plants are threatened by an insect pest which can kill the tree outright. This pest is the bronze birch borer. In some localities nearly all white or paper birches even large old trees, have been destroyed by this pest.

Infestation is first noticed when tips of upper branches turn brown. Large branches progressively die back, until the entire tree succumbs. Infested branches often appear swollen and brown, with ridges around smaller ones.

An examination of the inner bark of infested branches reveals numerous burrows, each four to five feet long, crossing and recrossing, completely cutting off circulation of sap. The burrows are tightly packed with sawdust and each contains a slender white grub about 3/4 of an inch long.

The larvae pupate in spring and emerge in June as greenish bronze beetles which cut their way out of the branches, leaving small, slightly oval holes.

Females deposit eggs in cracks in the bark. Hatching takes place in about ten days and the tiny borers work their way into the tree to repeat the cycle, further injuring the tree.

Control of this pest is difficult. Hatching larvae are the only stage exposed to chemical control. The recommended material is Cygon (dimethoate). It should be applied to trunk and branches the first of June so that the larvae encounter it as they try to burrow into the tree.

Trees should be fertilized and watered to maintain active growth. Some overwintering larvae can be destroyed by pruning out and burning dead branches in early spring.

The most promising control appears to be a small, parasitic wasp which is capable of boring through the bark with its ovipositor to lay an egg on the borer larva. Research is now in progress to find ways of rearing and establishing this beneficial predator.

When calling Mr. Jones
I find it most appalling
To have his secretary ask,
"May I tell him who is calling?"
One of these days
When I find it all too taxing,
I'll come right back to her and say,
"May I ask you, WHO IS ASKING?"

A dollar won't do as much for people as it used to, but then, people won't do as much for a dollar as they used to.

Bea von Boeselager

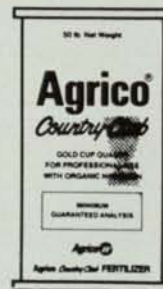


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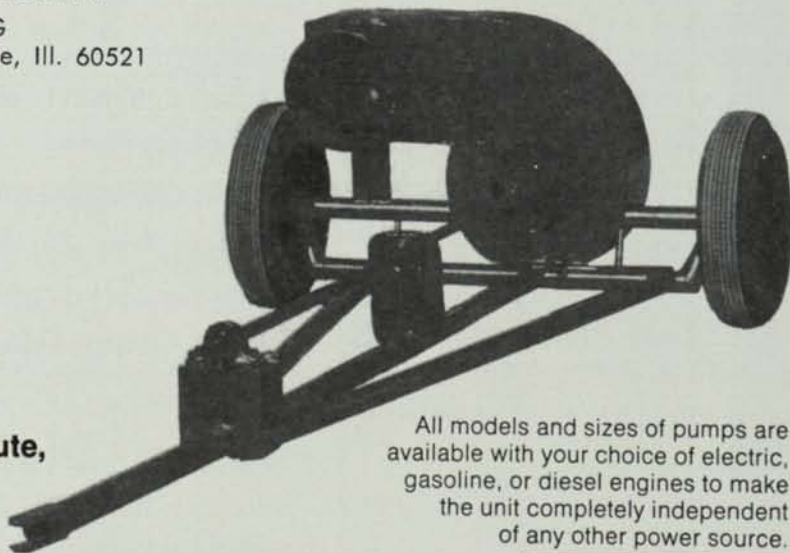
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