

"Ask Me Another"

By NOAH LOTT

WHAT problems of turf development and maintenance are troubling you? Write "Noah Lott," care of GOLFDOM, about your difficulties and he will give you some expert advice through these columns. There is no charge for this service. Don't hesitate to ask, for your troubles may be the same as others are experiencing and the answer will help others as well as yourself.

Q. The plugs of grass where our greenkeeper changes the cups usually die, leaving numerous brown spots about the green. How can this be avoided?

A. Several mistakes can be made in changing the cup which might cause the turf to die. It is difficult to guess which one or ones your greenkeeper commits. It is entirely unnecessary to have the plug of grass die. There are many greenkeepers who change the cup on their greens as often as three times a week who never lose a plug and you cannot pick out the spots where the cup has been a week before.

One of the most common mistakes is caused by having the green too wet when the cup is changed. Where the cup is changed in the morning after heavy watering at night the soil is altogether too wet to be handled. Tamping the wet soil from the new hole in the old one is making a puddled soil which will not grow anything. Some greenkeepers take fresh dirt with them when they go around to perform this task and discard the dirt from the new location until it has had a chance to dry out so it will crumble. Where there is poor drainage the holes sometimes fill with water during the night and not all of it drains away before the dirt is tamped in. Such a condition is almost sure to cause trouble in a clay soil if dirt is tamped into the water.

The remedy is to have the dirt which goes into the old hole just moist enough to pack without puddling. This can be determined by squeezing a handful of it. If the

resulting ball can be rubbed into crumbles it is all right, but if it packs into a pasty mass it is not fit to use.

Q. We have some nice large oak trees on our course which appear to be dying. Several large limbs have already died and we fear they are all going bad. We do not wish to lose these trees if it can be avoided. What do you suggest?

A. You had better try the same treatment a St. Louis club used a few years ago under similar conditions. Starting back some ten or twelve feet from the trunk of the tree, dig a hole about two feet in diameter and about the same distance in depth. Dig about six or eight of these holes in a circle about the tree. Fill the holes up to about six inches from the top with fresh stable manure and cover over with a layer of soil, leaving a depression of two inches. Then have the men who do the watering make a practice of keeping these holes well watered, that is fill them with water every time they water the greens. The trees no doubt are suffering from lack of nourishment. Feed them and you will note a change for the better.



Photo Underwood & Underwood
The ingenious helmet for the mower operator saves the club damage suits and the operator headaches—or worse.

Q. Is it good to cut these greens when dew is on the grass? Should Bermuda be watered during the summer months, and also your opinion of sowing rye grass with Bermuda during September and playing the greens all the year around? Does this rye grass hurt the Bermuda, or is it a good thing for the Bermuda?—A. S. H.

A. It does not do any harm to mow greens when the dew is on the grass, provided there is not a tall growth and the cuttings are not left on the greens. Wads of wet cuttings left on the turf often smother out patches of the grass. With this precaution we see no reason why you should not cut your greens as early as you care to do so. Many greenkeepers make a practice of whipping the dew off the greens with bamboo poles just before cutting. This gets rid of the surplus moisture, breaks up worm casts and gets rid of leaves and trash which accumulate on the greens during the night.

Yes, Bermuda should be watered through the summer months if you wish it to produce a close, thick turf. Bermuda will thrive in hot weather better than will most other grasses except crab-grass, but it requires water like any other plant. As it does not grow except in the summer, if

it does not get watered it will have a hard time getting along.

A good thick Bermuda turf will withstand a lot of trampling during the winter, although there is no new growth taking place. But it is straw-colored and not pleasing in appearance.

It has been the practice for several years in the gulf states to sow some quick growing grass in September on the old Bermuda sod in order to have a green turf during the winter. Rye grass is often used for this purpose and so is redtop and sometimes bent seed. The recently introduced poa bulbosa is being tried. If it produces the right kind of a putting surface it will have the advantage over the other sorts in that it will not have to be replanted each fall. So far its sponsors are only recommending it for use with Bermuda on fairways.

None of these grasses hurts the Bermuda, as the Bermuda is dormant during the winter while they are active and they all die down in the early summer when the Bermuda starts growing.

Creeping bent can be grown successfully at Winston-Salem and in our opinion it is superior to Bermuda as a putting green grass.

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