

"Ask Me Another"

By NOAH LOTT

Question—Our course was built three years ago, and the greens were planted with creeping bent stolons. We have a good covering of grass on the greens, but unless we water every day in dry spells the turf on portions of the green turns brown. The surface dries out quickly after a rain. We have been told we have "brown patch," but the treatments recommended by the Green Section do not correct the trouble.

Answer—This condition is no doubt due to faulty construction of the greens and not to brown patch. Take a hole cutter and cut into the greens, both where the grass is ailing and where it is healthy. A comparison of the soils in the two places should give you a clue as to the cause of the trouble.

In the days when the "layer cake" principle was followed in building greens such conditions as you describe were quite common. A layer of cinders, sand, or black muck, "humus," which is not thoroughly mixed with the soil, will cut off the capillary rise of water from below and as grass roots will not push their way through the layer the turf has to grow on what little soil and moisture there happens to be above it. The best remedy is to lift the sod and remove whatever you find is doing the damage and then relay the sod. This may be done on a half of a green at a time without serious interruption of play.

Question—Our course is on a heavy clay soil and our greens become very hard during the summer unless kept soaking wet. Is there anything we can do to remedy this condition?

Answer—Yes. Sand is the remedy. If you can get good sharp builder's sand you can apply it direct as a top dressing. Sharp sand will cut into the clay and spread out evenly in the soil in the course of a few weeks. It is best to use but a half yard of the sand to six thousand square feet of green at a time unless experience shows

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.

it may be applied heavier than that with no ill effects. There is no danger of overdoing the sanding on heavy clay if the sand cuts in and disappears. If it stays in a layer it may cause future trouble after it has been buried with top dressing. Good results may be obtained by spiking the green with a fork or a board with

spikes driven through it. The perforations should be straight down for four or five inches. Do not tear the sod to pieces on the surface. Follow the spiking immediately with a top dressing of sharp sand and be sure to work this sand into the spike holes.

Question—Do you recommend the use of charcoal as a top dressing for greens?

Answer—We do not. First of all, charcoal is not a plant food. It is contained in all plants, but it is obtained by them from gas, carbon dioxide, always present in the air, and not from the soil. Charcoal or carbon is about the most inert material known. It does not rot or undergo any changes from the weather. It is insoluble and so unavailable as food.

From the nature of the material it will not cut into the clay the same as will sharp sand. The only reason many greens have not been ruined by the use of charcoal is because it is so light that it is either blown away by winds or is washed off the surface by rains. The stuff sold golf courses under the name of "humus" is mainly carbon, hence its black color. Many greenkeepers know to their sorrow what to expect when a layer of humus gets buried about an inch below the surface with top dressings. You would experience the same troubles if the layer happened to be charcoal.

Question—Why is it a light application of ammonium sulphate is beneficial to grass while heavier applications burn and may kill it?

Answer—Plants take in their food in solution. The soil moisture passes into

the roots by what is known as osmosis. This is brought about by the sap in the interior of the plant being more concentrated—that is, having more solid matter in solution—than the soil moisture on the outside. Whenever the soil water becomes more dense than the sap the flow is from the interior outwards, thus drying the plant, causing what is known as burning. Most any highly soluble material, as common salt, will produce the same result. Dilute solutions on the leaves may not cause any burning until the surplus water is evaporated, leaving a dense solution. It is safer to apply any soluble substance on a cloudy day than in bright sunshine. An application of three pounds of ammonium sulphate to the thousand square feet of green, well watered in immediately after it is applied, will usually cause no harm. This may be applied either in solution or dry. If put on dry, it is advisable to mix it with four or five times as much sand to be sure of a more even distribution on the green. Much harm is done by careless scattering of such materials.

Question—Our creeping bent greens, planted three years ago, were perfect the first year, the finest any of our members have ever seen. Since then they have become infested with clover and weeds. The little annual bluegrass is taking hold, so we fear we are going to lose our bent turf entirely. What is the trouble?

Answer—It looks like your club got stung on the variety of creeping bent you planted. There have been a lot of inferior strains of creeping bent exploited by commercial growers who seemed to think any creeping bent would make first-class turf. As a matter of fact, of the many strains distributed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, only a few make permanent turf of the quality desired on a putting green. As a result we know of some clubs that are sorry they planted their greens with this grass. We know of many others that are well pleased with their creeping bent greens. It is a matter which should be thoroughly investigated before good seeded greens are torn up and stolons planted.

Check Up on Your Club's Insurance

By JACK FULTON, JR.

A MAJORITY of golf clubs operate on a budget basis. This system is satisfactory, providing the ensuing year is a normal one. But if unforeseen items of expense crop up, the club treasury may have difficulty locating funds with which to pay these items—unless the club has protected itself by taking out sufficient insurance of various kinds.

The award of \$2,000.00 compensation to an employee, for example, for an accident suffered on your grounds may be a sufficiently large item to make an assessment necessary when otherwise you would have shown an operating profit for the year.

Insurance is the one way to be sure that you are protected against unexpected expenses. Certain forms of insurance, the value of which will be outlined below should be carried by every country club.

Fire Risk High

Clubs attempting to obtain fire insurance generally find that the insurance

companies are unwilling to issue policies except at an unusually high premium. This stand of the insurance people is not unjustified, for the average clubhouse is of frame construction, and located a considerable distance from town and the nearest fire-fighting apparatus. It forms too great a fire risk to interest the companies.

The above statement may not apply to your clubhouse. It may be of modern fire-proof construction—an important factor—and not too far from the nearest fire department. If, in addition to this, your water supply is large enough to meet the requirements of fire-fighting apparatus, you can probably obtain protection at a fairly reasonable rate.

The average club however, will not be so lucky and should organize its employees into fire fighting units and arrange for the assistance, in case of fire, of the fire department of the nearest town,