

# "Ask Me Another"

By NOAH LOTT

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**W**HAT 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.

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**Question:** A correspondent in Northern Kentucky writes: One of our greens is surrounded on the west and north by woods and is on a hillside, being a pitch shot. It gets the sun only up to about noon of each day. It was planted with stolons but for some reason the turf is not healthy. Twice now it has come out well in the late spring and then has failed, and it is now in a state of failure, the turf being very light and not at all healthy looking. One side of it, the west, abuts a steep hill running up. All the balance of it is much lower, to wit, 10 to 12 feet. The surface is very sloping so as to drain readily all the water falling upon it. Along the side which abuts the hill they put in a ditch or track filled with cinders and drain pipe, thinking possibly there was seepage, but even this does not seem to better the condition.

**Answer:** The situation you describe as to the location of your green is enough to explain why you are not having better success with your turf. A side hill location is the one where we have the most trouble. There is usually a seepage spot half way down a hill which keeps the ground soaked part of the time and lets it bake like a brick in dry spells. This keeps the soil lacking in plant food as nature can not prepare any under either condition. To correct this trouble it is necessary to have the bottom of the drain back of the green lower than any part of the surface of the green. In this case it would necessitate the digging of a very deep ditch. A drain above the line of seepage could do no good.

Then in this case there are a lot of other troubles which may contribute to the ill results. Large trees with their wide-spreading root systems take up all the plant food and moisture as fast as it is produced and thus starve the grass. It is only by constant and frequent fertilizing is it possible to keep the grass well nourished and thrifty.

Then the steepness of this green is such that I imagine much of the water given it in dry spells runs off without soaking into the soil where it can benefit the grass.

Last but not least, just the morning sun alone is not sufficient for creeping bent. Is it not possible to open up the trees either by removing some of them or by thinning out the branches so it can get the sunlight during the rest of the day? If this is not practicable it may help matters by seeding in *Poa trivialis* (rough stalked bluegrass). This grass is the best shady lawn grass known at the present time and it seems to do well in the Cincinnati district.

Taking all things in to consideration it will probably be cheaper and more satisfactory to change this green to a site that is more favorable for grass growing if it is possible to do so.

**Question:** I would like to know if it is a good plan to put sulphate of ammonium and ammonium phosphate in water and spray them on the greens and what proportions should be mixed and how often would you put them on the greens. They were built last fall but some I have do not get very heavy with bent. They are built on sandy soil. Would you put in stolons in the thin places at this time. Which is the best plan to roll the greens—before mowing or after, and would you use a heavy roller or putting green roller?

**Answer:** Ammonium sulphate and ammonium phosphate are often applied in solution. It is our experience that it is more troublesome than to mix these materials with dry sand and scatter over the turf by hand but, nevertheless, many good greenkeepers prefer the liquid way. Figure out the number of pounds of the material you wish to apply, say three pounds to the thousand square feet of area, and dissolve that amount in plenty of water.

It is a good idea to sprinkle the greens thoroughly immediately after applying the fertilizer so as to wash the material off the leaves of the grass and into the soil. In this way there is no danger of burning the grass.

Two or three applications of either of these materials at intervals of about four to six weeks should do much to thicken up the stand of bent. If there are large bare spots on the greens they should have more stolons planted in them but probably all the grass is growing there now that the soil is capable of feeding and you will need to fertilize to get better results.

You should use a rather heavy top dressing on these greens—one with more clay than you have in the soil in the greens. A good heavy clay loam top soil should help a whole lot if used at the rate of a cubic yard to about five thousand square feet at an application.

I would roll after mowing using a light putting green mower.

**Question:** Our greens all have a streak of about two feet in width around the margins which are brown and look very bad compared with the rest of the greens which have very good turf. What is the cause of it.

**Answer:** This is a common condition which can be seen on many golf courses. It is caused by the scrubbing and bruising of the grass when the men turn the mowers and rollers as they work on the green. It is common practice to mow around the margins of the greens before starting the back and forth cutting. By this the outside of the green gets a double dose of cutting but most of the trouble is due to the scrubbing action of the machines in turning especially the rollers. Remember a lawn roller does not have a differential like an automobile.

Sometimes on built-up greens the margins dry out for some distance into the green and the grass shows the need of more water.

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## Undeveloped Markets Await Live Pro

THERE are three fellows for whom I used to feel sorry. They are Henry Ford, Alfred Sloan of the General Motors, and the golf professional. I used to think that their markets were so near the saturation point that they were destined to be out of luck in the future.

It seemed to me that everyone who could make the first payment had an automobile, and certainly every member of a golf club has at least a fair array of the equipment necessary to play the game. Hence the automobile men and the golf pros were in the plight of the washboard salesman who complained that he couldn't sell his washboards because they were like noses; everybody had one.

But men like Ford and Sloan soon showed me that there was no such thing as market saturation in their field. The family used to be considered the market unit for passenger automobiles. Now the unit is the individual old enough to drive and pay for a car. Around golf courses we see many of the caddies coming to work in dilapidated "collegiate" Fords that, due to the combined force of human ingenuity and providence, are running long past their

allotted spans. To the families that have Cadillacs the General Motors organization is suggesting the purchase of one of its less expensive cars, for what, queries this astute and resourceful band of salesmen, is a family with only one car?

Of these three gentlemen who aroused my sympathy, only the golf professional seems to have been negligent in shattering the false idol of market saturation. He is inclined to believe that when he had his present active members buying their clubs, balls and accessories from him his merchandising job is done and the profit possibilities exhausted.

### Buried Markets

I have seen figures on the number of active golfers in the country that ranged from one million to almost double this number. This took into consideration the male members of private golf clubs and the public park and daily fee course estimates of individual players.

Take a million and a half as a conservative estimate of the number of male golfers in the country. On this basis there

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