

"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.

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.