



The Value of a Playground

Children at a country club are naturally noisy; the strange surroundings seem to urge them to run and shout, and no amount of parental discipline will subdue them. This being the case, the best method of protecting the nerves of members from this inevitable confusion is to provide some spot for the children where they can exercise and shout to their heart's content. A playground will do the trick.

Above is the playground of the Columbian Country Club, Wheeling, Ill., a good example of the sort of equipment that will fascinate the children and keep them quiet.

Plan Your Year's Work Now

By C. A. TREGILLUS

IN A FEW weeks the greenkeepers, in the northern zone, will be in the thick of another campaign, and doubtless even now are fidgety for a little activity. Nothing is so hard on the nerves and general anxiety as the approach of zero hour, and in the matter of greenkeeping it is particularly unsettling for one does not know to a nicety where the starting point will be. Should the winter season have been kind and left the turf "up and coming," we have a running start on a firm footing; but should, by misfortune, the recent months have been in a mischievous mood, the handicap will be severe, and much time will be spent making reparations of various kinds. The old hands, being on the alert, have a great advantage over the newcomers who, not knowing exactly what to expect, or where indeed, to

look for the weak spots, will be getting more and more apprehensive as every lengthening day and balmy breeze brings closer the opening of the course work.

Now is the time to lay plans for the season's operations, so that everything will be in order and the work ready to commence without a hitch at the first sign of weather fit to start the turf moving. It is most likely that the budget has been passed by now and the committee and greenkeeper know what is expected of them. This is the frame, one might say, into which must be fitted the picture of the next few months' activities. There is a great diversity of opinion among golf clubs and greenkeeper associations, regarding the responsibility for the upkeep of the grounds. Theoretically the chain of trust passes from the committee to the

greenkeeper, the latter being the skilled official who carries out the wishes of the former. That being so, the committee might be said to assume the responsibility for broad policy, the greenkeeper that of detailed execution. However, the connection between the two is not nearly so defined and there exists a wide variation in the real shouldering of the issue and in the latitude allowed the greenkeeper in taking charge of the work and being answerable at all times for the condition of the course. Many superintendents like to have a free hand without interference, feeling that they know the course better than any one and that an active committee is more bother than help. Others like to have the full co-operation of the green-committee, so that the welfare of the course is an equal burden on the minds of both and in the times of stress, a joint liability. Which ever way it works, this is one time of the year when the two must get close together and figure out the ways and means of action and expenditure for the current year.

Plan Ahead

In order to get away to a good start, it is essential that a definite plan be followed so that all arrangements and preparations are completed before the regular outside work commences. Spring is a busy time. The greenkeeper is fully occupied with the supervision of the working staff and should not be bothered with the annoyance of checking over stores and ordering supplies or attending to last season breakages. If his work has been properly planned and he has gone about it systematically, this need not be at all; it is all a matter of putting first things first, and doing them. To describe briefly an order of procedure, let us tabulate, under a few headings, a program of initial moves in this year's greenkeeping methods.

Checking Equipment and Supplies

While the best time to go over the stores and equipment is at the closing up of the course, still it is not always convenient at that time and must be left over. That being the case, work of this nature must be put in hand well ahead of the opening of the outside work. Checking over machinery, replacing worn and broken parts, sharpening cutting edges, repainting and stock-taking are obviously essential matters in the upkeep of any course, but it is surprising how often this

necessary program is overlooked at the proper time and a dear price is paid for the negligence by inconvenient stoppages later on. If this work is done prior to the opening of the course, it must be commenced at an early date so that it can be finished, and not left half-done because the spring growth started sooner than was expected.

Give the Work to Experts

It is the custom of many clubs to ship their cutting units and other mechanical equipment to shops well equipped to give a thorough overhaul so that they will be in tiptop shape when put on the course. This is a very good practice, where the club workshop is not large enough or sufficiently provided for this work, or the help unable to handle it, but the success rests on the ability of the repair shop to do a good job. It is worth while to pay extra freight-charges and make sure they are done properly; instances are known where a local machine shop or garage has undertaken overhauls which were not satisfactory because the machines were not understood; imperfect adjustments were made. Mowing units call for special skill which cannot be expected of mechanics and fitters unfamiliar with the conditions under which they work. It is important that machinery sent off for this purpose should be away in good season so that it can be returned early, checked over and re-assembled, and also to avoid the last minute rush that seems inevitable at the shops.

It is also opportune to place the orders for such staple materials used through the season as fertilizer, sand, manure, mushroom soil, etc. If the bulkier goods are shipped in by car-lot and the weather permits, it can be managed very well at this time. It makes enough work to justify lining up of part of the working staff and getting them familiar with the organization and general layout of the property. This will save time and worry later when the regular work comes on. Spare flags, tee towels, tee sand supply—or patented tees, if sand is not used—may be looked over also.

Keep Fungicides on Hand

Fungicides for disease prevention and control will likely be bought later as the time of their use draws near, but it is well to have some on hand to be prepared for the eventuality of early trouble from

snow-mold. Observations show that this springtime fungus can do considerable injury if it runs its course, but is submissive to treatment if caught in time. Sufficient fungicide for this purpose should be in store to make immediate treatments, should the course lie within the snow-mold belt. It is a very good plan to attend to these details now; they are then finished with and a virtuous feeling prevails as the result of such promptitude. Incidental with this is the matter of providing suitable storage places for material such as fertilizer, which is liable to cake or deteriorate if not properly protected.

Watch the Course

A close survey of the course should be maintained as the time of the general thaw approaches. Considerable harm may be done during this period to turf which has come through so far without trouble, due to flooding, and the later freezing of the flood waters. In sections where the snow lies deeply all winter, it may accumulate in large drifts, often on greens in out of the way places. When the thaw comes suddenly, the drifts may disappear quickly and without harm to the turf, but where the thaw is protracted, these banks weep for days, even weeks, and may cause considerable injury, either by holding a sodden turf unable to dry off, or by the formation of ice sheets. This injury may be averted by carting off heavy banks of snow or breaking up the ice sheets when they begin to thaw and become loose underneath. These might seem like expensive operations to some clubs, but are well worth while, especially so if the surface drainage is not very efficient.

Where it is the practice to cover the green with boughs or brush, it will be noticed that early warm days will start the grass on these protected areas more quickly than would otherwise be the case. Some clubs favor this as it gives an early greenness, but it must be remembered that the early succulence may receive a severe check should the following weather be inclement. In the long run it is wiser to take the coverings off as soon as the snow has left the ground and they can be lifted.

It is at this time that snow-mold makes its appearance. Moisture and a near-freezing temperature appear to be conducive to its development and growth. Clearing away the snow and thus hurrying the drying up of the ground is therefore a measure of control. Immediate action also in treat-

ing the affected areas with fungicide will check further development and expedite a quick recovery. It will be seen that close inspection is an essential item at this stage of the spring program.

Show Committee Winter Damage

Immediately prior to the opening of the course maintenance routine, that is, about the time that the furniture is put out, it is a very good move to have a formal examination of the course by the green-committee, greenkeeper and other interested officials including the president and manager. At this season the serious damage of winter, as ice injury, winter kill, property impairment, etc., is apparent, and ways and means of repair may be decided upon. Any changes in course features such as including or eliminating rough, changing bunkers, in fact anything that affects either the welfare of the course or the playing conditions of the game, can be settled and noted down in a permanent record. It is surprising how many pages of typewritten notes can be gathered in this fashion on a single tour of inspection. The advantage of several pairs of eyes is that nothing need be overlooked and the opinion of every department is represented.

Establish a Working Schedule

The next phase enters upon the regular work of keeping the course in shipshape order, with the added burden during the opening weeks, of re-turfing spoiled areas, repairing washouts, removing debris, and generally tidying the course. As the days become warmer and the grass catches into its stride, a regular plan of topdressing, fertilizing, worming, and the like must be carried out. The very nature of the work, particularly so in the early weeks of playing season, demand a well-organized plan of action. A program made out in advance, even if not rigidly adhered to, has many good points. It will include items that might be overlooked later on; it is good for reference to make sure requests by the executives are not forgotten; and what is perhaps as important as anything, it will establish a continuity of schedule should the superintendent happen to be unavoidably absent from the course for any length of time. Where the chairman of the green committee takes a personal interest in the supervision of the course, a written program assures him that his suggestions and instructions are being effectively delivered to the greenkeeper.