

Preventing Winter Kill on Greens

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ONE way of preventing winter kill from ice on greens is begun by our force just as soon as weather permits and the ice is thawing up enough so it will crack it can be cut with a shovel, spade or axe without injuring the turf. This will save the grass by giving it air. Breaking up this ice helps thaw it quicker on arrival of the early spring. Care should be taken not to try and lift the ice off the grass, only breaking it up is sufficient. One should not attempt to uncover a green if entirely covered with ice from a sleet storm. In middle winter or in severe cold weather, this has been tried and proved fatal. Taking the ice right off the green is just like taking the clothes off our human bodies and going out in the cold weather.

It's the same with the grass on the greens. If covered once they should be left covered. Uncovering will chill the grass and will cause a winter kill.

One thing that can be done to help prevent winter kill, in a case of sleet ice, is to get a light seeder drill disc, and set the knives according to depth of ice so as not to cut into the turf, in fact the knives do not have to go clear through the ice, just get as close to the turf as possible, without going through the ice. Cut the green up in from two- to four-inch checkerboard squares. If done that way the first thawing spell that comes along will probably thaw just enough to open all these cuts on the ice and the grass will get air enough to live till more ice thaws.

I tried this four years ago. We had a sleet storm covering our greens, and we never had any winter kill. If such work is hindered by a heavy snow fall, not allowing this ice to be uncovered the green can be plowed in windrows with a V-shaped snow plow. When this is done the windrows can be removed off the greens by a Fresno and a team of horses sharp shod. When such work is done uncovering the ice to the open air it will be a great advantage when the thawing weather arrives. The sooner the ice melts, the better it is for the greens.

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