

Florida Reclaims Sea and Jungle for GOLF



By

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Tournaments in Florida lure large galleries. This shows the La Gorce course at Miami

FLORIDA, the winter playground of eastern United States, with its varied natural resources and flawless climate, is destined to increase in importance yearly as a golf center.

During the past few months it has been my privilege to avoid the icy blizzards of the north and enjoy the warm breezes of this peninsular wonderland. Along both the east and west coasts magnificent golf courses may be played under ideal conditions. In fact, links fairly dot the surface of this playground. However, I believe that scarcely a beginning has been made toward placing Florida where it belongs—as one of the most powerful magnets in the field of golf. There will be something singularly wrong if it does not grow in importance with amazing rapidity in this line of sport.

This is a period of transition for Florida. This is admirably illustrated in golf course architecture. Mud flats have emerged into flowering estates; palmetto jungles have been pushed back by an army of workers. The surface has been

moulded into a rolling terrain which will make beautiful greens and bunkers. All this has been done in an incredibly brief span of years. More has been done here in golf course construction than has ever been done before in the same length of time in any part of the world, so far as I know.

La Gorce Country Club at Miami Beach is an example of these stupendous engineering feats. In the Indian River district 4,000,000 cubic yards of sand are being taken from the sea to make a base fill for a new golf course project. This calls attention to the staggering sums which are being spent for golf course construction.

Turf Is Big Problem

What has astonished me most of all, however, is the growth of grass on the sand and marl clay dredged up from the sea and swamps. Abundant sunshine and moisture soon perform the miracle of transforming this barren soil, after the proper amount of clay loam has been

added, and fertilizer has been applied, into luxuriant Bermuda grass fairways. This sturdy grass, which has excellent qualities for the purpose, is used extensively to form the turf of these golf courses.

The problem of growing turf in Florida is similar to the problem of maintaining turf the year around which a few years ago confronted California. Under the semi-tropical conditions in these two states the problems are many and very complex. Considerable skill is required to keep courses in playable shape throughout the year.

The agricultural experiment station at Gainesville, Florida, now has under observation a number of strains of grass adaptable to tropical conditions and no doubt in the near future will adopt a strain suitable to this climate such as California was compelled to do before it was possible to secure perfect turf. Carpet and Bermuda seed-grown grasses and St. Augustine and Centipede vegetative-grown grasses may all be found on Florida courses. Unfortunately, it is impossible to maintain any of these grasses throughout the winter on putting greens without sowing a winter crop of rye grass, blue grass or red top.

The putting greens at Boca Raton Country club, sown with Kentucky blue grass, are very pleasing and no doubt are the outstanding greens in southern Florida. The tees, which were sown with blue grass also, were likewise very creditable. This particular course used considerable clay in the construction of its fairways to prevent shifting of sand and to retain moisture. The cost of this clay alone is reported to have been \$40,000. About the same sum was invested in a comprehensive fairway irrigation system. So far as turf is concerned there is no question but that Boca Raton is the outstanding golf course in Florida.

The foundation of successful courses in Florida is irrigation and plenty of it. Water is nowhere more essential for turf culture and maintenance. This is true because nearly all of the great number of courses along the coastal margins are built on sand and surfaced with very little clay or soil.

Soils classified by the Florida Department of Agriculture are as follows: Pine swamp, low hummock, high hummock, prairie and everglade. Pine land, which predominates, is covered with vegetable mould beneath which there is a brown sandy loam mixed with limestone pebbles

resting on a substratum of marl clay or limestone. Swamp lands are regarded as among the richest. These are alluvial and occupy natural basins which have been filled with vegetable matter washed in from higher lands. Drainage must precede any attempt to cultivate such land. Low hummock land is more level and has greater tenacity than high hummock land although the latter is much favored for grasses.

Greenkeeping in Florida requires constant study and experimentation as well as continuous effort. The goal is the development of a perfect all-the-year-around turf able to thrive in adverse conditions. Those actively engaged in this field in this southern peninsula are alert to the problems which confront them and keenly awake in seeking their solutions. This is indeed a picturesque and interesting land of enchantment and stands on the threshold of a new era in scientific greenkeeping.

Connecticut Greenkeepers Have New State Body

J. O. CAMPBELL, greenkeeper for the Wethersfield Country club, has been elected president of the newly organized Connecticut State Greenkeepers' association. Other officials elected: Joe Whitehead, Middletown Golf club, vice-president; George Wellen, Tumble-Brook Golf club, secretary; Otto Nelson, Farmington Country club, treasurer. Directors: James Langland, Madison Golf club; T. Foster, Manchester Golf club, and T. Griswold, Wampanoag Country club.

The organization was formed at Wethersfield, Feb. 7, and holds its second meeting at Middletown March 1. Monthly meetings will be held indoor during the winter and outdoor at various members' clubs during the summer. Qualified greenkeepers of the state are invited to write the secretary regarding membership.

One Greenkeeper Can Manage 3 Small-Town Courses

SMALL-TOWN clubs frequently cannot afford a greenkeeper, but there is no reason why they cannot band with two or three neighboring small-town clubs and hire one man for all three courses. A much higher class man can thus be employed, sufficient to supervise all grounds maintenance work of the several courses.