

Conditioning Course With Simple Thrifty Methods

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INTEREST shown by southern greenkeepers in articles on making and upkeep of Bermuda greens prompts me to relate my experience here in Temple, Texas, where I have nine greens and an 18-hole putting course. All my greens are approximately between four and five thousand square feet in size.

I am going to make my letter consist of four points, namely: Building a green and caring for it until ready to play, care of greens during the spring and summer, treatment of greens in early fall and care of greens during winter when the weather permits.

My club being a small one, we do not have too much money to go in for extensive alterations, but the club gives me a free hand to make any alterations I care to that will improve the course and not involve any extra expense, with the outcome that I have built five new greens, made extensive alterations to two, and now building a new 18-hole putting course in front of the club house. I may mention all the land here is black land.

In building a new green I usually plan on paper the size and shape, then go to the location and drive stakes in the four corners approximately to the height the green is to be at each stake, and then I drive three lines of stakes to approximate heights inside the corner ones, dividing the green as it were into four strips, filling in same with soil until the top of the stakes are covered.

I then start and put top of green as it will look when finished; after which I start and haul loads of sod ploughed from around the edge of the lake which our nine holes surround, placing all the clods by hand until the green is sodded. Then I get a few loads of stock-pen fertilizer and cover the surface of the green 3 or 4 inches thick. All holes and crevices between the clods of Bermuda root are filled up. I then take a heavy mule roller and roll the green well,

then water it well and re-roll. Then finally I get some good light soil mixed with good sharp sand and put about an inch coating over the green and roll well with a 500-lb. hand-roller. All this work is started in the fall and continued to December as the Bermuda is usually alive until December.

Spring Maintenance

When the green starts to grow in the Spring I keep it well watered and rolled. The watering on the thick layer of fertilizer makes the Bermuda grow much quicker. I top-dress it with sand soil and stock-pen fertilizer, which is well rotted and keep cutting until the green is entirely covered, at which time I give it another light top-dressing and then put it in play.

During playing season Bermuda greens should be top-dressed every four or five weeks, so as to keep the runners covered and not let the texture of the grass grow rank and have a heavy hard stubble after being cut, which makes putting very uncertain..

I dress my greens all the time with stock-pen fertilizer soil and sand, and I have never used any chemicals since I began looking after Bermuda greens. Of course, some may say I am too old-fashioned in my ideas, but I have always had the very best results. My members are satisfied and hundreds of visitors who come and play from large clubs from all over the 48 states congratulate me on the condition of my greens. I have had many calls for my advice from them as to how I get my results.

Dressing greens in early spring I put a heavy coat on, more fertilizer than soil and sand, and as the warmer weather comes I dress with very little fertilizer and mostly soil and sand, and in the fall, August and September, when the greens show signs of the hard play on them, I put a dressing the same as in early spring, mixed with flue-soot. This I believe, helps to keep out the

brown-patch fungus, and if I find large patches of brown-patch fungus showing I usually cut out and replace with new turf. Another thing I notice helps brown-patch is in the early morning wash the affected parts well before the sun gets on it and dress with a little compost from a pile kept handy to the green.

I don't water my green every day; usually 2 or 3 times a week, as I see they need it. I water both at night and early morning and during the day I have to do some watering too, as we can't afford a man all night. But during watering I keep the sprinkler going all day, so as the sun won't burn the green.

Top-Dressing After Frost

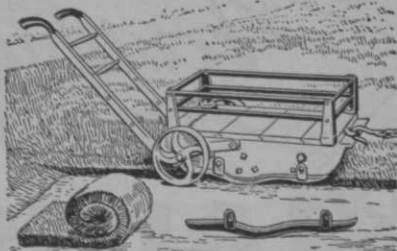
After the first frosts have killed the grass, I usually put a heavy top-dressing and cover all the dead grass, which in time rots and becomes food in itself for the green, and the heavy top-dressing gives me a better chance to keep winter weeds off the green, as you can drag the greens with a mat or use wooden spreaders which usually kills the weeds. This gives a reasonable surface for winter golf and at the same time protects the roots from heavy freezes.

I also do quite a little rolling of greens in winter, as the black soil puffs up with rain and frost and the rolling keeps it much firmer. Don't use too heavy a roller, as you may pack the green too firm and keep the oxygen from getting to the roots when the grass starts to grow. In cases when my greens get packed too firmly I usually get round-tooth forks and push them into greens about 6 inches in depth and pry up lightly all over the green. You will find it loosens up your green and the grass grows more rapidly. I prefer this method better than the spiked roller. Of course, it is much slower, but I think the better of the two methods.

This I usually do in early spring and after loosening the green I top-dress it preferably with sand only, but I can't always get sand, owing to the expense, and then I usually use two yards of light soil and one of sand, which makes a fairly light sharp dressing. But if anyone cares to try my methods and can get sand easily, use sand only as it goes down into the holes the fork makes and keeps the green open, allowing plenty of oxygen to get to the roots.

Regarding my top-dressing I usually start to haul the stock-pen fertilizer during the very hot weather every year (about 100 cubic yards), as my fairways don't need so much cutting. We have no fairway sprink-

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ling system. When I have the fertilizer all piled up at the barn out in the open, stacked about 2 feet high, I usually get a good rain on it. If not, I put a sprinkler on it and after I get it nicely moistened I go round the edges of the lake, which has been reduced in area owing to the hot weather and I plough up all the silt and cover my fertilizer about 6 inches thick and let it lie there until the next spring. In fact, I don't even use it then, but I turn it over as I usually have enough compost lying there ready for next summer. That means my dressing has lain for two years, which gives it a good chance to root well and let all weed and seed sprouts get killed.

I am not in the least sensitive to any severe criticism by any of the readers who have Bermuda greens and if they see any weak spots in my methods, will be glad to hear their ways, as it may help me greatly, and I will welcome and appreciate such criticism.

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"PETE'S" PURCHASING GUIDE

New York City.—Arthur D. Peterson, Inc., 11 E. 44th St., has issued its 1930 catalog of course maintenance items. The attractive and informing book features Worthington cutting equipment and tractors, seed, fertilizer, Royer compost mixers and gives details of much other material for maintenance and construction use.