

# Native Sons Whip Skimpy Budgets With Smart Use of Machinery

By ARTHUR LANGTON

**A** CERTAIN college president defined an educated person as one who can adapt himself to any conditions in which he happens to find himself. This being true, greenkeepers far and wide should feel justified in writing several degrees after their signatures as the result of having taken a post-graduate session in the school of hard knocks. The severe faculty of this institution has administered in the past, and is continuing to administer, a course of study necessitating the closest diligence on the part of the greenkeeper if he is to avoid failure. New and unexpected conditions confront the student at every turn so that the unbroken routine is the rule rather than the exception.

In California, as elsewhere, this year has been particularly trying on the course superintendent in that adverse conditions have combined against him to a degree never before experienced, but the fact that he is coming through with honors seems to be a testimonial to the excellence of his previous training. Unprecedented heat and sultriness has been accompanied by brown-patch of all known varieties, army worms, cut worms, and a host of other pests. And then there has been the depression. But through it all few golf courses or even parts of courses have been absolutely unplayable and in the majority of instances few golfers are aware of the stress to which their courses have been subjected.

## Ingenious with Machinery

In order to bring about this favorable condition in the press of circumstances it has been necessary for the western greenkeeper to utilize every available money saving device that he or his fellows could contrive. Particularly has this been manifest in the mechanical department of the golf course and it is this phase of the greenkeeper's activity that may be deserving of special mention because of the ingenuity displayed therein and the general adaptability of some of the resulting gadgets and contrivances.

However, to say that it took the current

economic condition to develop the latent mechanical ability inherent in the California greensman would be doing him a rank injustice. Years ago he found that machines made for eastern conditions would not in every case be equal to the work demanded of them on the Pacific coast; therefore it became necessary for him to modify the existing machines or to develop new ones. That these inventions were effective is demonstrated by the fact that many of them have been seized upon by national manufacturers whose products are in use on all golf courses. An excellent example is that of the power mower. In 1913, W. W. Beaver, greenkeeper at the Virginia C. C. of Long Beach, attached a cutting unit to a mobile chassis upon which was mounted a one-cylinder gasoline engine as a medium of locomotive power. True the newborn monster was ugly, slow, cumbersome, and apt to tear things to pieces, but it was a forerunner of the modern machines which skip over fairways today mowing a 12-foot swath.

A visit to any southland course will convince the most casual observer that every effort is being made to curtail expenses, and the methods used are such as to be of possible interest to every greenkeeper in the nation. For instance, Jack Wilson, now at the Rio Hondo club in Downey, has a device for filling in the holes made on greens by high pitched balls. This gadget consists merely of a piece of one-inch pipe in which a longer metal rod is inserted. When filling holes the greensman goes to the apron of the green and jabs one end of the pipe into the turf and pulls it out. This extracts a divot which can be pushed out by the rod into the hole mark on the green. This system which is that of the hole cutter used on all greens is especially useful on new or soft greens on which pitched balls make a hole too large for the turf to be pushed back into place.

The same greenkeeper frequently uses a match and time-saving grass burner consisting of a length of pipe bent into the shape of a cane, in the curved end of

which is stuffed a piece of sacking. The pipe is filled with kerosene and allowed to impregnate the fabric which is then lighted as a wick. The advantage of this burner is that back-firing is made quicker and more effective.

### Stolon Planting Permits Play

The necessity of transferring his greens to bent without interrupting play was the nice problem of F. C. Groos of the Long Beach C. C. To aid him in his work he devised a dibbling machine by fastening two sharpened steel discs, nine inches in

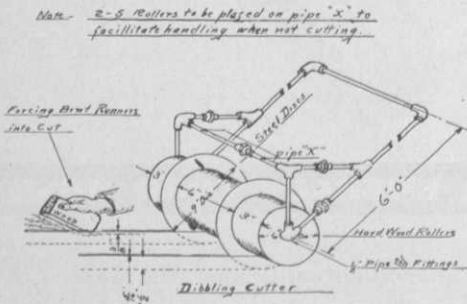


Diagram of stolon dibbling device made by F. C. Groos.

diameter and six inches apart to a hardwood roller six inches in diameter. To an axle in the roller he affixed a pushing handle. This device made the cutting of slots in the green to receive the stolons easy and accurately spaced by having one disc run in the cut made on the former trip. The process of forcing the runners into the cuts was to use a piece of four-inch grooved flooring, one edge of the groove being cut away, the other edge being covered with tin to prevent wearing. The runners were inserted into the cuts with one hand while the piece of flooring in the other hand forced the grass down to the required depth—about three-eighths of an inch. After six cuts were planted they immediately were topdressed, rolled, and watered so as to prevent both cuts and runners from drying out.

The results obtained were most gratifying for in little more than 30 days from the time of dibbling, 11 individual bent plants were present in a four-inch plug cut from one of the greens. The plants had grown not only to the surface but had spread from one to one and one-half inches on both sides of the original incision. In from three to six months a distinctly perceptible movement could be seen in the

greens; the bent had filled in rapidly and crowded out the upright grasses. In less than a year the Long Beach greens were all better than 75 per cent bent and six months later they were practically pure. Not a green was out of play for a single day.

### Must Have Sprayer

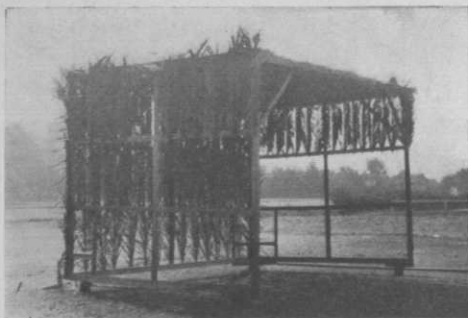
One of the most ingenious greenkeepers among those in Southern California is William Thompson in charge of the Mountain Meadows course at Pomona. He recently has completed a spraying outfit that would be of great use on any course. It consists of a small centrifugal pump attached to the engine from an old tee and approach mower and a hundred gallon tank mounted on a course-made trailer. The tank is of special interest, being a round-bottomed, flat-topped affair divided into two compartments so that chemicals to be sprayed can be dissolved in one while the contents of the other are being distributed. The outfit, while being exceedingly compact and light, will generate 150 pounds pressure, enough for all golf course purposes yet not great enough to require the use of special hose.

Not being supplied with electricity, Thompson has constructed his own power plant in the shape of an old Ford motor which operates all the shop machinery at a cost which compares favorably with that of electric power. One of the machines that is run in this manner is a home-made mower grinder with a traveling carriage which moves the blades to be sharpened along the face of the grindstone in the approved manner. Not one in a thousand have Thompson's mechanical genius to compensate for temporary budget restrictions.

### Lesson Shelter Is Inviting

Professional Harry Pressler's portable shade at the San Gabriel Country club has become famous throughout the state as the place where this popular pro gives his lessons throughout the summer months. It consists of a boxlike framework on wheels covered with palm fronds and was constructed by Greenkeeper W. E. Langton of the mission town course. The structure is located on the practice grounds and can be moved so as to face away from the sun and to be always on a good patch of turf, thus tempting all and sundry to take lessons without danger of being blistered.

At Hacienda C. C. near La Habra, L. N. Boynton decided that the use of his green



Portable lesson shelter made for Harry Pressler by W. E. Langton.

spiker required too much time so he remedied this difficulty by the simple expedient of hitching it behind his power greens mower where it travels merrily along waiting for some manufacturer to take up the idea in a big way. The same man almost has completed his augmented topdresser which he believes will give absolutely even coverage with no ridges. It is built around a popular topdresser now on the market but has an additional agitating medium and a screen which further guarantees that the dressing will be deposited evenly. When completed the improvements to the old machine, which give every evidence of success, will have cost less than five dollars.

### Work on New Machines

Besides the gadgets made by greenkeepers to meet new conditions, nearly every one is working on or planning some new machine to revolutionize some particular phase of his daily work. Frequently these marvelous machines never materialize; sometimes they progress far enough to be proved impractical; occasionally something of real significance is evolved. Thus Greenkeeper Beaver, he of the early power mower, is working upon a power driven spiker to puncture the layer of adobe which is present just beneath his turf. All current spikers will not penetrate deep enough without tearing the turf, but Beaver believes that he is on the right track; if so, his machine when completed will be a boon to all greenkeepers with adobe-founded layouts.

For years a number of the greenkeepers have been attempting to produce a machine that will eradicate Bermuda grass, but so far they have been unsuccessful. Several machines have been developed which will cut the grass' runners, but this

acts as a method of cultivation and the pest grows stronger and stalkier than ever after such a treatment. The only effective way of removing Bermuda without digging up the whole green is that advocated by W. H. Johnson of the Royal Palms course at San Pedro. This method consists of rolling up the turf so the roots of the weed are exposed to enable one to dig them out with a knife. The turf is then unrolled and all remains of the weed are dug out and the edges of the turf are sealed with soil and sand. In this way play is not interrupted and all evidences of the weeding vanish in a few days. This system may be slow but it is effective and it is doubtful if it will be superseded within the next decade by mechanical methods. Crabgrass is another weed that defies mechanical means of eradication, jackknives or two-pronged forks being the most effective weapons to be used against this enemy of good greens.

Returning to the matter of mechanical ingenuity, it is gratifying to note that Eastern manufacturers are very much on the watch for any ideas which they may glean from greenkeepers on the coast. As a consequence the big concerns now are never very far behind the trend of turf culture in California.

### Pro Collects Damages for Contract Violation

**A**LTHOUGH AN unkind fate seems to decree that many a pro gets buffeted about from pillar to post, it occasionally happens that things work out differently. According to word from Michigan City, Ind., damages amounting to \$600 were awarded Eddie Baening, who had been professional at the Long Beach C. C.

Baening was employed at the aforesaid club in 1927 and 1928, and after his first year there he was given a contract for 1928 and 1929. However, at the end of his second year, officials of the club refused to hire him for the next season.

Although his salary was stipulated at only \$1,500 annually, he sought to recover \$10,000 damages, which he said had been caused him by the loss of profits in the sale of golf equipment, instruction, and damage to his professional reputation.—*The Bristolite.*

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After club elections, GOLFDOM should be told the names and mail addresses of new officers.

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