

Building Pointers that Better Bermuda Grass Greens

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IN THE immediate past the belief has been that the major requisite for Bermuda grass putting greens has been the absolute necessity of being equipped to water them. This, to my mind at least, is only one of the prime requisites necessary and a minor one at that.

Stopping for a second, to think back, have any of you ever seen a decent stand of Bermuda, either cultivated or wild, growing in a boggy situation? I do not believe that any of you can recall such a situation but that all of you wonder at the wonderful growth of this grass under certain conditions. Give me a piece of land that is well drained (I'm almost a fanatic on that requirement), only moderately fertile, and I'll throw some Bermuda roots or seed on it and presto!, the march of the Bermuda army is under way. If you don't believe it, try it, or for first hand information on the subject ask the nearest nurseryman. He has had to fight it while most of us have to run around begging it to grow and that under the most adverse growing conditions.

The success of your green depends almost entirely upon the thoroughness with which you prepare your greens area for seeding. Never drain a green so that the entire surface area drains off the green at one point. To do this makes the green that much harder to water thoroughly and, in addition, requires that you topdress more often if you do maintain a smooth putting surface. The flow of drain water during a heavy rain washes away your topdressing which, in turn, exposes the roots, causing them to send out long runners, with the result that you have a bumpy area, and in most cases, an area in your green that seems subject to every conceivable ailment.

Tile the Green

After the rough grading has been finished—TRENCH THAT GREEN and TILE IT. The depth of the tile drain can only be determined by going at least 8 inches below your "hard pan" and then back filling up

to the grade level of the pan with crushed stone. Next, incorporate enough humus material in the clay to make it immune to "baking out." This can best be done by spreading it completely with the rottenest manure obtainable and discing it thoroughly. The next steps are open to argument, but let me state that they have brought me really wonderful success. On greens approximately 6000 sq. ft. of area I spread at least 20 yards of clean coarse sand and 10 bales (regulation size) of peat moss after pulverizing the moss. I then set the disc so that it cuts in about half its depth capacity and thoroughly incorporate the sand and the moss into the top 3 inches. Now haul onto the green the best topsoil obtainable (woods earth preferred) and spread this to at least a 2-inch depth. It helps, too, to disc this in very slightly as these discing operations eliminate the possibility of "layering" of the various soils.

Buy Best Seed

After your gang of rakers have "manicured" (as one of my negro foremen chooses to call it) the surface into the finished contours you are all ready for seeding.

Never buy any but the very best seed obtainable. I prefer Extra Fancy Arizona Bermuda. To get an even distribution of the seed is, no matter how sown, almost impossible but try, regardless, for that evenness. I rake in all my seed with potato forks or diggers and then follow with the fine rakers so as to obtain a finely dressed finish. My reason for the diggers is that I believe that, raked in a little deeper, the possibility of loss due to birds and from an unexpected heavy rain is minimized and I also believe that, although germination is somewhat slower, the young plants have more vitality when the seed is planted deeper.

Let nature, in the form of rain, bring that grass up unless you are equipped to water with a mist type of sprinkler only. Just as soon as you can, get your men on

that green and start them weeding. Keep after each green until the weed content is almost negligible.

Perhaps you have wondered why no mention has been made as to fertilizers. Another belief of mine, and a firm one, is that the best method to fertilize is by mixing the commercial fertilizer in your topdressing and then using a spiked roller, making certain to completely aerate every square inch of surface. The holes from the spikes then serve a double purpose, namely, aeration and pockets for the fertilizer. It is, of course, taken for granted that you will eliminate all trash such as stones, etc., from your greens soil and that you will protect the green from any storm water washing across it from outside sources. Topdress regularly and frequently and do not hesitate, during the spring growing season at least, to thoroughly aerate your root system by a good heavy raking. The result will be, I am sure, a joy to your members and course players and a source of satisfaction to you that nothing else can take away.

Suggests National Handicap Tournament

SUGGESTION of a national handicap golf tournament conducted under the auspices of the U. S. G. A., has been advanced by Kenneth Goit, an official of the Toro Manufacturing Co., Minneapolis. The idea has been favorably received by sports writers and golfers in Minnesota and a state handicap event has been inaugurated.

In presenting the idea Goit sent the following bulletin to the sports editors of 75 leading newspapers:

"All the prize money passed out every year for golf tournaments is split among ten or twelve top-notch professionals.

"All of the silverware donated every year for amateur competition is won by a few leading amateurs.

"What the game needs, if it needs anything at all, is more definite recognition of the millions of handicap shooters, who for years have put up the money to keep tournament competition alive.

"Why not a national handicap tournament sponsored by the U. S. G. A.?"

"This would provide healthy competition among millions of steady handicap shoot-

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