

British Turf Expert Compares Maintenance Conditions

By REGINALD BEALE

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IN ENGLAND we enjoy a temperate climate, with the seasons slowly merging in with each other. The spring is generally mild and wet but some years we get a long spell of cold, dry N. or E. winds with frosts at night which check growth. In the summer we seldom experience excessive heat and more seldom an "official" drought with 14 consecutive days without rain.

The autumn is mild and wet with occasional night frosts towards the end, whilst the winter as a general rule is open, mild and wet, with some frosts and occasionally a freeze-up for a week or two and perhaps once in 10 or 15 years a big freeze with the mercury going down to zero but seldom under.

As grass thrives best in a humid temperate climate it is obvious that it is easier to grow grass in England than it is in the eastern states of the U. S. A.

To show how mild it is in England, it is not unusual for the grass to grow practically all the year round and as a general rule outdoor sport of some sort can be enjoyed on 365 days of the year without serious discomfort.

Small clubs here are content with greens with an average area of 400 to 600 square yards but on the best courses they are usually 800 to 1,000 square yards, the day of the huge freak green having gone, I think, forever. A course length of about 6,000 to 6,500 yards is generally aimed at with a cut width of 50 to 70 yards, according to conditions, length of hole and the nature of the rough.

The chief turf pests are the common earth worm, leather jackets, (*Tipula paludosa*) and weeds of various sorts. There are no virulent diseases at present such as you have on your side and which seem to be associated with the acidity theory.

Wages of course laborers are about 40 to 50 shillings a week, and the number of

Mr. Beale is no stranger to the U. S., having been connected with such American clubs as Brookline and Old Elm in constructing and advisory capacities prior to the War. The lasting excellence of the American jobs with which he was associated give his remarks weight.

Beale is vigorously opposed to the acid theory and as a result of his agitation for a show-down the acid theory is being analyzed extensively in England.

His comments about the Board of Greenkeeping Research indicate that the scientists, the greenkeepers and the manufacturers have a hell of a time trying to be bosom buddies, the world over. Things over here apparently are much more tranquil than they are on the other side concerning the mutual relations of the factors interested in turf maintenance.

Individual research has demonstrated its value; so has the research of organizations, so why there should be any wrangle is one of the many mysteries that still will perplex when this generation has been led to greener pastures.

Mr. Beale's notes were set forth in answer to questions presented by GOLFDOM and appear without editing.

men on an average 18 hole course is about 9.

The usual 18 hole course maintenance cost is about £2,000 per annum.

Length of active playing season is all the year except when we experience an exceptional winter.

Standard of English course condition as compared with average metropolitan district U. S. course is better for the simple reason that the climate is more favorable to the growth of grasses and in the South of London there is a belt of light sandy soil upon which we can enjoy dry clean golf regardless of the weather in the winter. Apart from this the natural contour of the ground is more broken, interesting and suitable for golf than the sites usually occupied by golf courses in the metropolitan areas of the United States. The rough or outsides in many cases are

clothed with heather, gorse, bracken, etc. which is very pleasing to the eye.

British greenkeepers take up readily any efficient mechanical tool or implement, provided that it gives a good finish.

Water is laid on to the greens of most good golf courses but it is seldom if ever required on the fairways. Fertilizing is carried out by the use of topdressings and various types of complete grass fertilizers.

Condemns Acid Theory.

Up to 1928 the soil of the greens was kept neutral to alkaline and, in consequence, fertile and healthy.

Later a Board of Greenkeeping Research was instituted which accepted the American acidity theory as a fundamental truth.

The Board has a very influential backing and is financed by the Golf Unions, some clubs and a few private individuals. The theory was taken up enthusiastically by some, reluctantly by others and not at all by those who knew their subject.

It has now been going on for about 5 years and as the miracle of perfect greens free from worms, weeds, coarse grasses, etc. has not materialized and the turf has seriously deteriorated instead of improving, there is a suppressed revolt going on. Suppressed because the officials of a club do not like to admit that their greens are not as good as they were and because of the difficulty of questioning a "Board of Research" backed by prominent agricultural scientists.

To put it shortly the Committees who know little or nothing about the subject are worried and confused. The Secretaries fear to offend the official Gods whilst the head greenkeepers with their jobs at stake have to do the best they can.

The pot is simmering and it will not take much for it to boil over and then I think we will revert back to sanity.

The word "Research" is wonderfully inspiring but when the quest is directed by enthusiasts and cranks, as is often the case, it leads nowhere and advance is retarded.

I saw nothing in the U. S. A. to attract me to the acidity theory but not having visited the country for about 15 years I do not know if it is generally practised now or simply given lip service. I do know, however, that it has been in existence for a sufficient length of time for it to be proved beyond doubt or written down as bunk.

Soil Management for Greenkeepers Is Valuable New Book

"SOIL Management for Greenkeepers" has been published recently by its authors M. H. Cubbon, assistant professor of agronomy at Mass. State college, Amherst, Mass., and M. J. Markuson, assistant professor of agricultural engineering at the same college.

The book, beyond any question, is something that will find a prominent and helpful place in the library of the greenkeeper and green-chairman who is keeping up with his job. It is written from an intensely practical angle, but is not so deep that even the new green-chairman will be lost in a welter of technicalities.

Chapter heads are: General make-up of soils; Fundamentals of chemistry; Plant nutrients and soil acidity; Effects of organic matter on soils; Nitrogen changes in soil; General considerations in fertilizers; Fertilization of golf greens; Fertilization of fairways; Watering greens; Use of weed killers and other poisons; Causes and remedies for wet lands; Engineering methods; Profile leveling, etc.

There is considerable material in *Soil Management for Greenkeepers* that has not appeared in other manuals of practical greenkeeping.

Price of the book is \$3.00 postpaid. Copies will be sent on receipt of remittance either by GOLFDOM's Book Dept., 14 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, or direct from the authors.

British "Green Section" Issues Annual Report

OVER in England, the Board of Greenkeeping Research corresponds to the USGA's Green Section. Founded in 1929, it maintains experimental gardens at Bingley, Yorkshire, and its activities include inspection visits to clubs; analyses of soil samples, fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, etc.; advisory letters; lectures; and demonstrations.

The 1932 annual report of the B. of G. R., just at hand, contains in addition to the formal resume of the year's activities, several articles of considerable interest to American greenkeepers, including one on nitrogenous fertilizers, one on worming fairways and one on the identification of grasses.