



## CONN. GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS

Samples of turf and a miniature golf landscape formed an interesting educational display at the recent meeting of the Connecticut Golf Superintendents at Bridgeport.

# HELPFUL HOBBIES

(NAGA Convention Paper)

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**E**VERY GREENKEEPER interested in his work likes to know more about the many things which enter into his daily life. There is no better way to know the many things than to make hobbies of them. How many greenkeepers know all they want to know about the insect world, some of which cause lots of worry and many headaches? One sure way to know more about insects is to make a collection of them, preserving them in alcohol in small glass tubes, identifying them properly and labeling them accordingly.

Their habits and life cycle should then be studied at every opportunity and the cures found for those that are a menace. I believe that the collection should be kept where the men working on the course can see them, so that they too can identify and kill all they can of those that are likely to prove troublesome, and save any that may be a help in killing others. One of these is the praying mantis. The common toad (while not an insect) is often abused and even killed, although it is one of the best insect killers we have.

This past year my men brought in off the course more than a dozen of the deadly black widow spiders, having recognized them from those in my collection. They also took more interest in all insects flying or crawling around the course, and brought many in for identification. This alone illustrates the usefulness of one hobby.

### Learning Trees and Shrubs a Helpful Hobby

Arboriculture, or the study of trees, is always interesting to the greenkeeper who

admires a fine tree or wants to know more about the trees on or around his golf course. Most of us at one time or another had to collect leaves for our school teachers, learning the names of the most common varieties and let it go at that. Let us see if we can take more interest in them for a while until we know by sight all the trees and shrubs that are on our courses or in our district, find out what trees are our best citizens and how to treat them for the diseases and insect troubles that may attack them. To begin with, get a heavy paper sketch book, some lamp black and olive oil and a collection of well-formed leaves from the various trees and shrubs. Then make imprints in the sketch book, find out their common and botanical names and classify them accordingly. To print them, make a mixture of the lamp black and oil, spread thinly on a sheet of heavy paper, take each leaf and press vein-side down on the mixture, then transfer to the sketch book and if pressed evenly all over, a true impression will be made, and like finger printing, no two leaves will be alike.

Flowering shrubs and evergreens should be kept separate and classified. The time spent in gathering and identifying the various specimens is well worth while and is likely to leave a lasting impression in the mind as well as in the sketch book. Any help or information required will be

readily given by the state forestry departments, state colleges and others interested in forestry.

Weeds and other plants would be a study by themselves. To work with them is to know them. No one would collect and print them and not be interested enough to find out what they were. Those that can't be identified right away may be kept in pure alcohol until recognized by some authority and before long, one should be familiar with every weed, plant or tree that is on or around the golf course.

### A Grass Museum Is Aid to Greenkeeper

A study of the many grasses should appeal to every greenkeeper and makes an interesting hobby for a while. It is often said that a greenkeeper knows every blade of grass on his course (we hope he does), but does he always recognize the same grasses on other courses under different soil and climatic conditions? Is he familiar with the characteristics by which the various grasses are more easily identified? Did he ever have a youngster (interested in nature study), come to him with an insect or piece of grass for identification, and failing to get satisfaction, hear him say, "Dad, I thought you knew all about bugs and grasses?" To take imprints of grass is impossible because so many blades are closely allied in size and shape and in some the veins do not stand out clear enough. The best way to collect them is to put them in narrow glass tubes containing pure alcohol or imbed them in collodion. They will keep for a long time especially if kept in a dark cool place. In saving grasses for identification, it is best to save enough of the plant so that the bud is included, some grasses being recognized by the way they are rolled in the bud when young.

So much for the insect and plant life around our courses. How about some other hobbies that one may find interesting and helpful? Who is more interested in the weather than the greenkeeper? His whole life is affected by it, and at times it makes a difference between success and failure, so why should he not make a study of it? With the help of a few instruments such as a barometer, thermometer, wind indicator and weather charts, etc., and knowing the meaning of the different clouds, sunrise and sunsets, he can become quite a weather prophet himself, although we all know that a change in wind directions or low and high pressure areas

will ruin any forecast. Close study of the weather while watering greens will often save lots of trouble with over-saturated soil or by anticipating attacks of brown-patch.

A greenkeeper is often regarded as an expert on the weather by members of his club, especially during club tournaments and other festivities, so he should make an attempt to justify that reputation. The United States Weather Bureau will cooperate and for a small sum per year forward weather charts every day giving weather conditions, pressure areas and wind directions in all parts of the country. Some idea of what to expect in the near future may be gained from them. A very interesting item entitled "Working with Weather" by Clinton K. Bradley, Passaic County Golf Club, Patterson, N. J. appeared in January GOLFDOM. Many benefits may be derived from following his suggestions.

### Microscope Is Interesting Tool

Many an interesting and instructive hour may be spent by taking some of the lower plant life or fungus and examine it under the microscope or good botanical lens. The active growth of brownpatch may be shown—how it attacks and spreads from leaf to leaf. Water algae from a poorly drained green will present itself in a true plant like form. Leaves, stems and especially grass roots may be examined closely to determine if their condition is healthy.

We shouldn't forget our feathered friends. We listen to and enjoy the call of the bob-white and the song of the mockingbird or other birds peculiar to our districts, but do we think of them when snow is on the ground or when food is scarce? Let us give them a few places where they can build their nests and rear their young in safety. Study their habits so as to know the best foods with which to supply them, and they will repay us many times with their cheery song and help us to fight our battles against the insect world.

There is always plenty of literature available from which we can study to enlighten us on any hobby we may take up. Most public libraries carry a selection of books pertaining to the subjects mentioned. The various United States departments issue bulletins which can be obtained for a nominal sum, and they help to keep the reader posted on latest developments and discoveries.