

Avoid Watering "Schedules"-- Says Jack Counsell

That watering practice requires special treatment for each fairway on some courses rather than a set uniform schedule was emphasized by John L. Counsell in his discussion of watered fairways at the GSA meeting. Counsell, Supt., Salem CC, Peabody, Mass., also is treasurer of the Greenkeepers Club of New England. Said Counsell:

"It is common knowledge that grass will grow most luxuriantly when it receives the proper amount of moisture. Water has been said to be the life blood of plants since most of the food is taken up in solution by the plant roots. For steady growth it is important to have a continuous supply of moisture in the soil. Applying the optimum amount of water to provide the most favorable conditions for healthy fairway turf requires an understanding of fundamental principles plus common sense. The problem of supplying sufficient water to turf for its best growth and development becomes one of supplementing water supplied by nature. The solution requires recognition of local conditions such as kind of grass, soil, drainage, elevation, climate,

etc. The need for water can be judged by the appearance and behavior of the grass and it should be applied generously at each application in a manner that the ground will absorb it thoroughly.

"Overwatering is wasteful and injurious. There is no schedule for watering. Each fairway is an individual problem and some valves may not be used during the entire season. We have been told that evaporating soil moisture carries some of the soluble plant nutrients to the surface of the soil and the water leaves the plant food on the surface. In the absence of rain the plant cannot use the food unless artificial water is available to carry the food elements down to the plant roots. Water is essential to keep turf from suffering badly during periods of prolonged drought. Remember that a grass that grows vigorously throughout the season can resist the invasion of weeds.

"Irrigated fairways will produce a generous amount of grass clippings continuously during the season and the mineral elements in them become available during the process of decay. Chinch bugs and the grubs of the May and June beetle apparently do not like moisture, consequently there is very little damage from



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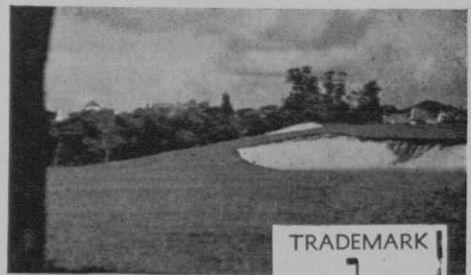
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these pests on watered fairways. Practically all of the turf injury from the grubs of the May and June beetle on our course is confined to the rough where the soil is usually dry.

"Watered fairways help to maintain the natural beauty of the golf course and the resilient turf provides walking comfort during long dry spells. Playing conditions are more uniform and fairway lies are better on turf that is kept alive in dry weather. Divots then can be easily replaced. You have probably heard of the golfer playing on a sun-baked fairway who could not replace a divot because he had swallowed it in powdered form. The most generally submitted reason for poor fairways is dry weather. In most sections it is practically impossible to maintain a constant growth of fairway turf by depending upon the natural rainfall.

"Anyone considering the installation of a fairway watering system should recognize the fact that where unfavorable conditions exist, fairway irrigation may cause complications. However, it has been our experience at the Salem CC, where we have watered the fairways for the past 10 years, that intelligent watering together with sensible maintenance practices will produce a dense healthy turf on bent fairways with improved playing conditions.

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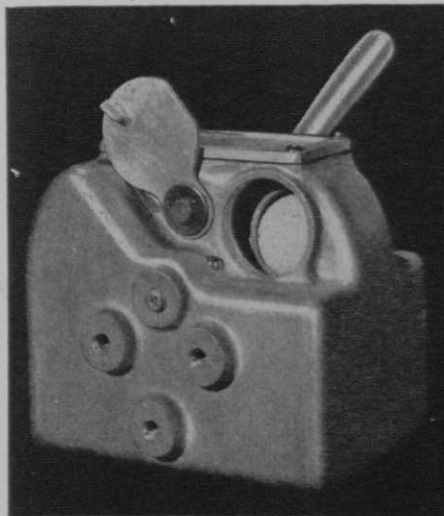
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