

period until tests show that phosphorus is needed again.

**Q**—We hear a lot of discussion about “thatch” and “mat” but there seems to be a lot of disagreement on definitions. What is your explanation? (N.H.)

**A**—Let's start with grain because that is where most of our trouble begins.

Grain is the surface development of grass stems and blades which interfere with and affect the true roll of the ball.

Thatch is the next deeper layer of living material (stems, leaves, runners, stolons) which, together with the surface grain, acts like a “thatched roof” to shed water.

Mat is the dead felt-like material between the thatch and the soil.

In my definition it all begins with the grain. If we keep this under control we will automatically control thatch (living tissues) and mat (dead tissues).

Grain and thatch can be removed mechanically a little at a time and there will always be live grass to furnish a putting surface. To drastically remove grain, thatch and mat all at one time would

utterly destroy the putting green, leaving no living material to grow and produce a new putting surface.

Mat must be brought down chemically and biologically with living organisms, aided by aerifying to remove columns of mat leaving holes through which air, moisture, nutrients and roots can move freely into the soil below.

A limited quantity of mat may be tolerated because it may provide a certain amount of cushion to help hold a shot. This would be true only if repeated frequent aerifying is practiced to overcome the bad effects of the mat and if vertical mowing is done to prevent grain and thatch from forming.

### WHAT PRO SHOULD KNOW

*(Continued from page 52)*

cated that in most cases the shop-boy would be wise to ship his refinishing problems to a suitable and experienced source.

Irons, as a rule, are able to withstand much more abuse than wood clubs. On iron clubs, the shop-boy does not encoun-

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