

How We Saved the Turf at North Hempstead

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OUR greens have had a long history of summer burn-out that are now kept at a dense, rich green all summer.

When I came to North Hempstead CC in 1948, after 35 year's experience in this area, the turf was in really poor condition. Every summer the greens and tees would burn out and lose turf. Members often referred to the club as a "spring and fall course."

In 35 years, a fellow learns how to handle most situations in maintaining a course, but during the past nine years nothing we did at North Hempstead kept us from losing turf on the greens and tees. We tried extensive aerifying and cultivation, new chemicals, different fertilizing programs. And, of course, we did a lot of



Joe Sylvester

hand watering. All our efforts were to no avail. We still had a "spring and fall course."

Much of our trouble was due to shallow rooting. In 1956, we read in *GOLFDOM* about the results being obtained with the new non-ionic wetting agent, Aqua-Gro. Here was a new technique that sounded as if it might help! The quick, deep penetration of "wetter water" should encourage deeper roots. Freer availability of water should bring our turf through the summer.

In early June, 1957, the greens were already starting to burn out, showing the usual dry, brown patches of dormant turf. We bought a supply of Aqua-Gro and sprayed greens, collars and approaches on June 22 with the recommended dosage of 8 ozs. to 1,000 sq. ft. The results were amazing! The treated areas took water much faster. We noticed that the soil was more uniformly wet. Actually, in less than 48 hours, the improvement in the grass on the greens was noticeable. By mid-July the greens had completely recovered with no evidence of brown, dormant areas. The greens had regained their early spring vigor and were in excellent shape throughout the rest of the summer!

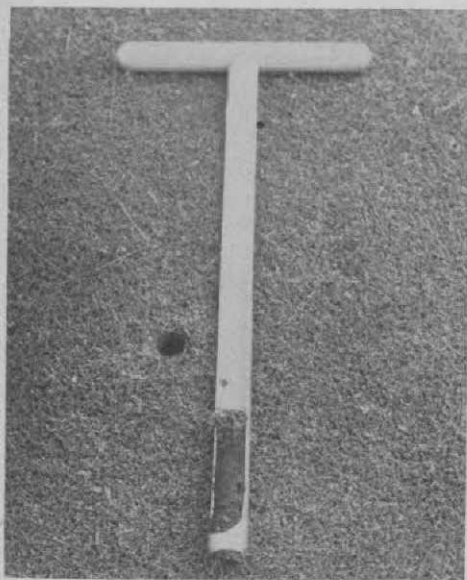
Many of the greens have mounds which were particularly hard to water, requiring considerable labor for hand-watering. After the first application of Aqua-Gro, the men noticed a definite softening of the mounds. They took water quickly and their maintenance became much easier.

Softer, Easier to Walk On

The fact that we had such good turf on our greens through the summer brought many favorable comments and questions from members. We knew then that our problem was solved. Using Aqua-Gro as a maintenance tool, we would no longer have only a "spring and fall course."

With results obtained on the greens by mid-July, we decided to spray our tees and high knolls on the fairways. Results were equally successful. We felt that treated areas were more effectively watered by our sprinkling system because the turf recovered. Actually, all the treated

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Roots this year are twice as deep as they would normally be.

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North Hempstead Turf

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areas were softer and easier to walk on. The greens would hold a shot better, and it was easier to tee-up a ball on the tees. In the latter part of August, we made a follow-up application on the greens as recommended (2 to 3 months later.) There was a continual improvement in both appearance and density of turf. This lasted into the fall.

This past year has proved to me that



Greens and putting clock (above) no longer fade with first heat spell. Members are elated to know they can play from April Through October at North Hempstead on turf that will hold up.

there are new techniques being developed continually that many of us aren't aware of. Changing characteristics of plain water and making it "wetter" is certainly one of them. Besides producing excellent turf, we estimate that we have saved 30 per cent in the labor needed to maintain our greens and tees. We have used less water and we have watered less frequently than before. Last April we examined the roots of the turf on the treated areas and found them to be nearly twice as deep as in previous years.

This year we will be using Aqua-Gro extensively. We plan to use it in treating the clubhouse lawn and other high traffic areas as well as for more general use on the course.

Committee Studies Traps

A sand trap committee has been appointed at Beverly CC (Chicago dist.). Green Chmn. R. A. Podesta in a note to his committee says: "When it is realized that since 1940, the cost of sand has increased about 70% and in the same period our labor cost has risen over 60%, it becomes obvious that a re-appraisal of our trap situation is desirable. The program should have the following objectives: Elimination of unnecessary traps. Possible reduction in size of traps. Possible redesign and/or relocation of present traps."