

GOLFDOM

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What Have You Done to Improve Your Maintenance Operations?

*Five superintendents describe
some methods and ideas they
have conceived that make
course management easier . . .
Maybe they will help you*



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Maintains Nursery for Fairway Turf

By **CHARLES G. BASKIN**
Supt., CC of Waterbury (Conn.)

When a nursery is established, the first thing a person thinks of is using the turf for tee or green repair. But how about fairways and roughs? Fairways take as much or more punishment as par 3 tees, especially about 175 to 200 yards out. Seeding divots is all right, but re-growth is slow. If you have turf to lay in the divot marks, the appearance of your course is quickly improved, especially after busy weekends. Sodding the rough may be overdoing it, but don't forget that a large percentage of your players constantly take the long-grass route to the hole. If the rough at your club is low cut, the divots there stand out with the same sore-thumb prominence that they do in the fairways.

Our nursery for supplying turf for fairways and roughs is in an experimental stage. We planted it only last year. Eventually, we may decide that seeding the gouged out areas beats sodding them, but we are going to give the new plan a fair trial.

Courses that have manual watering systems don't always find it possible to hire persons who are willing to work split shifts to operate them. We solved this problem by finding a school teacher who is attending summer school. He is happy to come to the club early in the morning and set out the fairway sprinklers and return in the evening and repeat the routine. That gives him the late morning and afternoon free to attend graduate classes. Our watering schedule dovetails perfectly with his school work.

Deeper Roots Give Bermuda New Life

By **HUNTER GAMMON**
Supt., Wolf Creek GC,
Reidsville, N. C.

Wolf Creek was one of the first courses in North Carolina to put in Tifton 328. That was back in 1956. The first two

years the grass was planted, it came up beautifully in the spring. We topdressed greens three times a year, aerified lightly and verti-cut heavily. We have always been on an organic fertilizer program and have resisted the suggestion of members to overwater.

The third spring the 328 was in, spots appeared on the green surfaces and it was evident that the grass wasn't growing with its accustomed vigor. For the next two years it was touch and go and, finally, in 1961, we lost practically all our fine Bermuda.

I came to the conclusion that the 328 roots were too shallow. We had been using aerifier tines that were from 3 to 4-inches long, and ½-inch in diameter. I decided that we needed 6-inch tines of ¾-inch diameter. After using the larger tines, topdressing with coarse sand and fertilizing with 12-4-8, we verti-cut only lightly. Thereafter, our crew dragged the putting areas three ways and slowly soaked the greens.

Three weeks after this spring preparation program was carried out, a check showed that the roots were growing to a depth of six inches, as compared to only three or four in previous years. That convinced me. I threw out the old tines and kept the new. For the last three years, our 328 has come in strong and always gone the distance.

Members Are Interested in Turf Clinics

By **JOHN J. SPODNIK**
Supt., Westfield CC, LeRoy, O.

Golfers are more interested in turf than you may think. They aren't going to track you down to the maintenance building and ask about the different varieties of bentgrass, how diseases get started or how to rid their lawns of broadleaf weeds. But if you meet them halfway, many of them are willing to listen to what you have to tell them about turf management. And, if you are in the midst of one of those summers when grass isn't growing for you or the greens aren't looking their best, it gives you a chance to explain why.

That's if you have an explanation.

One of the most satisfying things for a supt. is to explain maintenance work to a group of members and have one — just one — display a deep-down interest in turf. It sometimes happens, usually when a person grasps what a wonderful thing it is that bent can be kept cut at a quarter-inch or less and continue to thrive. The dawning reaction is invariably expressed in this way: "You know, I never realized that greens are cut so close. It's a miracle that any grass grows on them." Thereafter, you have a strong admirer in your corner.

We have conducted several rainy afternoon turf clinics at Westfield in the last couple years. It has been surprising how well they have been attended. When it is seen that the rain isn't going to let up, we announce the clinic over the P.A. system and the members file into the lobby, dining room or a lounge, where we get set up. Slides, charts and turf samples are among the props we use. And, nothing beats the chalk talk for lecturing and demonstrating. We don't alienate the club manager because persons who attend our show are encouraged to bring their drinks to the clinics.

Supts. talk a great deal about improving their relationship with the members. I know of no better way to start than by holding clinics such as we conduct. When you come down to it, every golfer is interested in turf.

Progress Also Consists of Looking Back

By **DICK VIERGEVER**

Pick up nearly any business magazine, regardless of the business covered, and you will find most articles are written on change, progress, new methods and new developments. This is as it should be. We are interested in the new. We already know about the old. Nevertheless, it doesn't hurt to look back at practices in use many years ago. If nothing else, we may get a few laughs at the primitive ways.

Once in a while, though, we may run across something that we can successfully

put into practice today. How many of us remember the old cinder base green which was the standard of excellence 50 years ago? While some of the specifications recommended today may be better, the old cinder base type of construction, when properly done, will make a far better putting surface than some of the greens we see today.

Nothing Was Resolved

Consider the topdressing of greens. I recently attended an educational conference during which an hour was spent in discussion of this subject. Nothing much was resolved; nor would it have been had the session been prolonged for a day or a week or a month. It is much like the advice of experts on child psychology. The saying used to be "Spare the rod and spoil the child". Then came an era during which children should never be spanked. Now the "experts" admit that spanking may sometimes be necessary. The same applies to topdressing.

In the old days topdressing several times a year, or "sanding" as it was called by many supts., was an integral part of course maintenance. Then, from the mid-30s to the mid-50s, came a period when many of the turfgrass experts agreed that topdressing as such could virtually be done away with. Indeed there were fine putting greens which had not been topdressed for more than five years and yet remained in superb condition. Now, again, most turfgrass and golf course authorities believe that regular topdressing has an important place in the maintenance of putting greens as well as some other areas.

We might even ask, "How much change has really taken place?" The conversion from manpower and horsepower to engines and tractors, the use of chemicals for weed and insect control and the development of irrigation systems from the hoses and hose boxes to quick coupler systems, to automatic valves which operate without manpower are among the most significant.

The chemicals certainly do a better job. This we realize as we compare, for instance, the weed-free condition of golf turf today with that of the pre 2-4D pe-
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Improved Maintenance

(Continued from page 26)

riod and the nuisance and cost of hand-weeding in those low-wage days.

Can we say there has been comparable improvement in machinery use as we consider all phases of the advance that has been made in mechanized maintenance? The percentage of labor cost in today's maintenance budget is about the same as it was 25 years ago. Certainly, the standard of course condition is much higher than it was a quarter century ago and the work schedule must be accommodated to much heavier traffic hence, theoretically, much larger revenue.

Imagination Widens Use of Chemicals

By J. DAVID HEISS

Supt., Cascade Hills Country Club
Grand Rapids, Mich.

To lower costs or control them while preserving high standards of maintenance at Cascade Hills, we have built and equipped a new maintenance building, have bought large hydraulic mowers and have applied automation to our watering. These features are part of the pattern of progress at most clubs.

In one important respect we think we have made some advances that are now rather uncommon, but which probably will be standard practice at many courses in the future.

We have found that the proper use of chemicals has meant considerable labor saving in some areas in addition to improvement in course appearance and playability.

For example, we have a large orchard of old apple trees. The blossoms are pretty but in the fall it consumes a lot of labor to rake up the fruit as it falls. Since the trees are old the fruit is small and not good for eating. It is also time-consuming to pick the apples. We now use a naphthalene acetic acid to set the blossoms so the apples will not form. This does not hurt the tree or affect the blossoms.

We have some hard-to-mow areas on

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our course. To these we apply Malic Hydrizide to reduce or stop growth. We also plan on using this material in the near future to eliminate the frequent hand trimming of the hedges and ornamentals around the club house. Power companies are using the product to reduce tree trimming around power lines.

We planted a number of small trees several years ago. We knew we should keep the ground around the trees open so the water could get to the roots easily. Open ground also keeps the large mowers from coming too close to the tree and breaking the bark. To hoe is time-consuming and even one week makes the area seem unkempt. We use Simizan which acts as a pre-emergence herbicide for any growth, yet will not harm any tree or ornamental even if sprayed on the foliage. We then dress the area with wood chips, leaving it somewhat beautified and more playable.

These cases are, I think, generally new in grounds maintenance. The use of chemicals is limited more by imagination than by any other factor. Labor savings

often pay for the chemicals. Today the supt. has only to recognize what he wants to get rid of and then select the proper material.

Drainage Renovation

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Burrows prepared a survey for city officials calling attention to the necessity and advantage of installing a new drainage system. In it, Burrows pointed out that the Glencoe course is inundated in spots until late in the spring and following heavy rains, many low areas remain under water for as long as a week. This, the Glencoe greenmaster pointed out, results in the onset of destructive diseases such as pythium.

Drainage Flow Reversed

"Forty years ago when the course was built," Burrows' survey continued, "Glencoe's tile drainage system was adequate to carry off excess water. But with the construction of real estate developments in the vicinity of the club, outside water