

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

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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.

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