

Putting green

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perintendent, Canoe Brook CC, Summit, N.J.

Mr. Craig kicked off by discussing the height, frequency and technique of mowing. The reason for mowing, he said, was to produce a true, rolling surface. You are trying to get the millions of grass plants to stand up in a dense form so that you only mow the tips.

Mowing heights vary between 3/16 and 5/8 inches, he said, with 1/4 inch being normal. With bentgrass, he observed, if you mow much lower than 3/16 inch, you cut into the grass plant itself. Mow longer than 5/8 inch, and you encourage the bent to lie down too much when it is rolled by the mower roller. On frequency, Craig said the only way to produce a true putting surface is to mow every day with a sharp mower. The only exception to this is not to mow when it is cool, and there is no growth.

Mr. Craig explained his technique

of having all his men mow along the direction of play on Monday, for example, then change in a clockwise fashion every day. This way, he says, you can check that your orders are being carried out, as all the men should be mowing in the same direction relative to the direction of play on any given day.

The importance of the correct technique on the turn was emphasized. Craig said he had seen many aprons damaged by men turning abruptly on the apron instead of making an easy pear-shaped turn 15 feet off the green.

Craig advocated the use of a brush or comb as being the easiest way to get the grass to stand upright. He said he used one every day except weekends, or when it was hot and bruising could result. Lapping the mowers was most important and should be done every two to four weeks.

The reason for vertical mowing, Craig explained, was first, to get bentgrass to grow up straight, second, to reduce thatch—you need a little thatch, but not a lot of it and

third, it keeps your grass young by cutting out the older runners and stimulating new and healthier growth. You can do it whenever the grass is growing, but never when it is too cool for the grass to grow. You must always fertilize afterwards to let the grass recover.

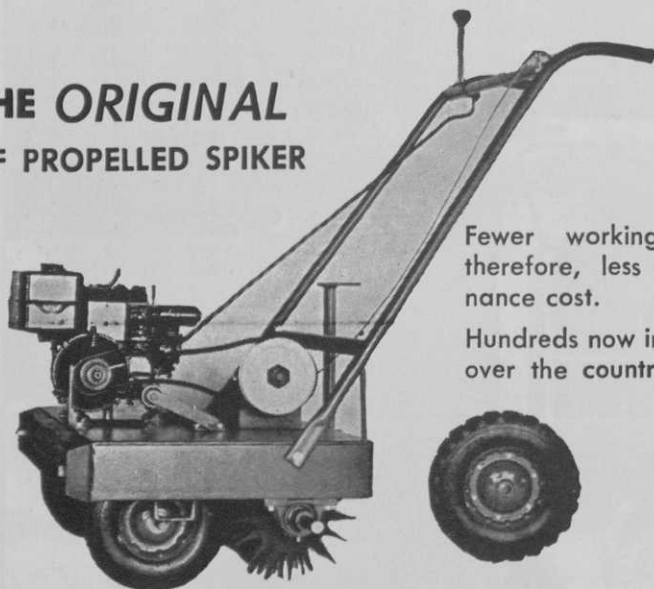
Against grain problems, you use thinning or light vertical mowing. This can be done any time in the year except in very hot weather when bruising might occur. Knives should be set from 5/16 to 1/2 inch apart, down to the level of the first runner. You can't go too deep, or the grass will be completely defoliated.

Craig emphasized how important it was for the superintendent to be physically present when vertical mowing was being done. He must not leave it to his men to do on their own. He must also supervise when the vertical mower was being started on the next and other greens, as each green could need individual treatment.

Deep vertical mowing is done to eliminate thatch. Blades should be

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PGA Business School, Plaza Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri, March 17-22.

38th Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference, Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, March 20-21.

2nd Rocky Mountain Golf Management Seminar, Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Colorado, March 18.

7th Annual Florida Turf-Grass Trade Show, Jack Tar Harrison Hotel and the Belleview-Biltmore Hotel, Clearwater, Florida, April 24-26.