

# How to winterize your course

Now's the time for improvements. Ideas: build concrete drainage pans, repair machinery, paint equipment . . .

by Stanley Metsker

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If you want to get more done to improve your golf course in the off-season, the leaves turning color is a signal to plan your winter work.

The job of gathering leaves and trimming trees can keep a crew busy in mid-fall at many courses with large trees. But newer courses, like Boulder CC, have few large trees to worry about.

Many other jobs can and should be done before the frost sets in, however. The final few weeks after the grass stops growing can be filled with useful projects squeezed out of the summer schedule. Here are a few, including approximate cost and labor (man hours) required:

| Job   | Hours      | Cost      |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Repairing parking lot, roads and cart paths | 112        | \$ 246.40 |
| Building fences                             | 65         | \$ 354.00 |
| Cleaning up gardens                         | 40         | \$ 88.00  |
| Dredging lake or stream channel             | Contracted | \$3000.00 |
|   | 8          | \$ 72.00  |
| Making water system changes                 | 48         | \$ 205.60 |
| Cleaning ditches or hazard area             | 53         | \$ 232.00 |
| Stockpiling fertilizer                      | 80         | \$ 255.00 |
| Building new ice rink (at Boulder)          | 60         | \$ 132.00 |
| Maintenance (4 weeks)                       | 100        | \$ 220.00 |
| Making drainage pans                        | 90         | \$ 243.00 |

(Costs include a machinery charge and materials, except for first item.)

Last fall we built a new greenhouse. (It is used primarily to raise bedding plants for the clubhouse summer gardens.)

It took two men about a week to build, including preparation, selecting materials and cleanup. Materials cost approximately \$150, with heating cables and electric heater. The lumber was rough cut, the roof is corrugated fiberglass and the walkway is cut into the ground so there is no need for side walls, benches or expensive construction. It has a thermostatically-controlled fan to assure even temperature.

After it was completed, we took geranium cuttings, rooted them, and when spring came we had 200 beautiful geraniums to plant.

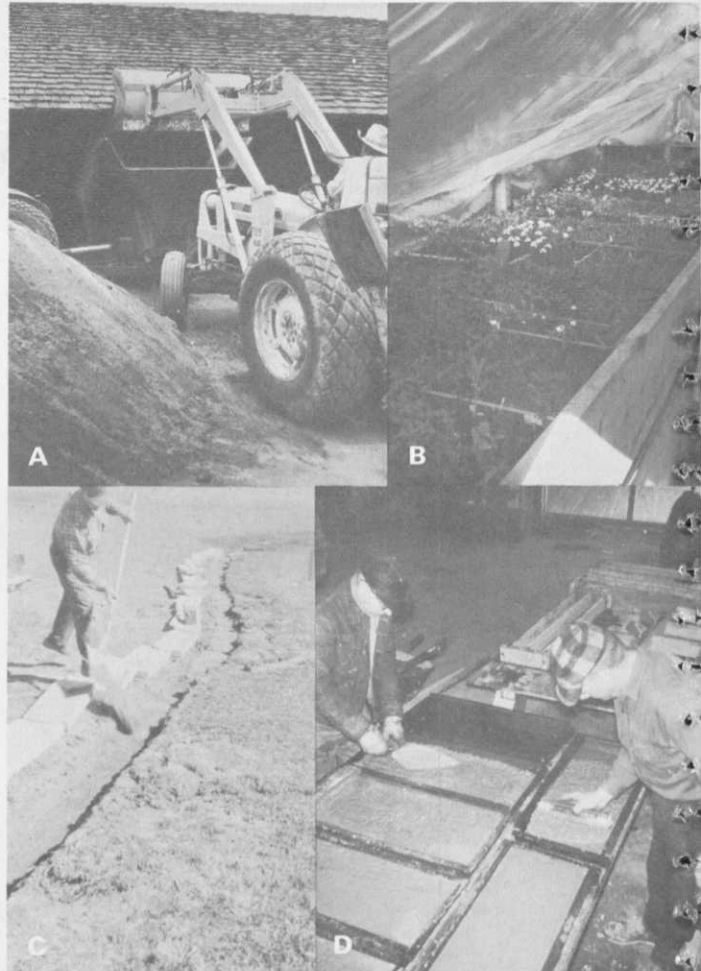
Most of the seedlings are started in February or March. Some of the easiest for us to grow have been allysum, dalia, marigold, linum and balsum (see photo). We find that petunias, begonias, coleus, and other fine seeded plants are harder to handle.

When the fall ends and snow flies, you should be

ready with inside projects for your permanent crew. Here are examples of winter jobs Boulder plans:

- Making Christmas decorations;
- Repairing machinery;
- Making concrete drainage pans;
- Painting equipment and furniture;
- Raising flowers for summer landscaping;
- Attending turf education meetings;
- Preparing next year's budget, maps and reports.

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A. Winter project illustrated here is the mixing of topdressing for next spring and fall. Soil is being loaded into spreader that blows it into storage building until it is used. B. These are the bedding plants to be used next spring. C. This shows installation of drainage pans that are being finalized in photo D. Two men can install 300 feet in one day. One man can make ten pans in 1½ to 2 hours.

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One off-season activity of ours is tied in with our location.

The club is five miles from the city, surrounded by farms. We have taken advantage of this fact by buying, loading and hauling manure directly from farms to the golf course. This saves money. Commercial dealers charge about \$5 a cubic yard, while we get it for 50 cents. We buy about 50 yards (cost: \$25) and put it on badly-worn or still undeveloped areas. The manure retains sunlight and heat to help sparse areas green up early in the spring, and stay active later in the fall.

Christmas is one time when we go all out to please our members. Each year we trek to the nearby mountains to cut a 13-foot evergreen tree for the clubhouse lobby. We flock it, set it up, decorate it, and one year even motorized it to rotate. The whole crew pitches in to make evergreen roping, wreaths, and cutouts of Santa and reindeer. We string lights around the clubhouse, on light poles, in the parking lot and to highlight displays. It takes about 40 man-hours, to achieve routine Christmas decorations. To construct extra cutouts and displays takes another 40 or more.

There is also no end to improvements you can make with concrete, during the winter season. Landscape or retainer walls with large blocks is one idea. One of the continuing projects at Boulder is making concrete drainage pans. We use a mixture of five parts sand, five parts 1/2-inch-rock and one part cement. A bit of calcium chloride is used to make them harden rapidly. We have our own molds, and pour 10 a day. (See photos). The pans measure about 1 by 2 1/2 feet, with a slight furrow on top. Laid end to end, they are used to drain areas too flat for proper natural drainage, yet subject to heavy flow after rainstorms.

They are easy to install, don't plug up and work superbly. We have about 800 feet of these drainage troughs installed, about half of which were made and installed last winter.



One of last year's off-season projects at Boulder CC, was building this greenhouse. The snow fence on the roof is to shade tender plants.

Probably the most common, yet important, winter job is equipment maintenance. Not every piece of machinery has to be overhauled or painted every year. But each should be checked thoroughly. Lubrication is very important. All blades should be sharpened. When spring comes, you'll want everything in your shop ready to work.

In our area, there are periods even in mid-winter when golfers can get on the course. If it runs more than a few days, we might have to change flags and tee markers as usual. We keep three permanent cups in the greens, then rotate the flags. Watering in winter is not unusual, either. Cold, dry, exposed greens and mounds, especially, need moisture.

There is never enough time, to get everything done, even in winter. Such off-season projects take you right into the first days of spring. That's the time for planting new trees, adding sand to traps, mixing topdressing and preparing new areas for seeding.

No one but you can plan exactly what should be done this winter that will most benefit your course next season. But plan now to use your time well and get a head start on the new year. □