



United States
Golf Association

Green Section
Great Lakes Region



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Mr. Monroe Miller
Golf Course Superintendent
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July 16, 1993

Dear Monroe,

The July-August issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* was a real humdinger, mostly because of the technical articles by Drugan and Packard. O.J. would have loved both! I must take issue with your implications (in "A Bandwagon Business") that spiking and vertical mowing operations were fads and now out of style. Not so. Verticutting is still the best tool to prevent spike snags, since groomers are seldom set deep enough to cut off the unrooted ends of stolons. Once over every week (except the week after topdressing) is usually enough. The appropriate setting leaves grooves visible when viewed in the direction of travel, but not at 90 degrees. Some superintendents prefer twice over at the time of topdressing. Groomers just don't do this very well, if at all, unless you risk peeling the putting surface.

Spiking? I think these are helpful in interseeding greens during the playing months - just before topdressing. Granted, there is less surface crusting, since sand topdressing became the "in thing", unless you consider the low-mow crust of algae seen so frequently. I really don't know about stolon cutting with these things to help generate new growth at nodes, but it used to be a good thought. I have second thoughts when I write things like this, so maybe you've got the right string but on the wrong yo-yo. Maybe some of the newer, quicker, hi-techier gimmicks have replaced some of the old standbys through hype in type, tell, or tales. And incidentally, very light, wide rollers once substituted for mowing on Sunday morning.

Another quest that has bugged me since EPA came in is why lead arsenate was essentially abandoned by our industry long before production plants were closed down. Not the risk in handling, but because the newer chemicals work faster and were easier to apply. We just forgot about *Poa annua* because we could keep it alive longer with the new stuff. But, maybe it wasn't as good as we remember it to be. Now you know what I do on July 5 "holidays".

Sincerely,

Jim Latham
James M. Latham

JML:DGC

Editor's Note: No argument from this golf course superintendent about anything in Jim's letter. In fact, walk into my shop right now and you will see spiking units hanging on one of our new Greens Kings. Spiking still works on occasion.

Although I cannot speak for Sandy Grant or Bogey Calhoun, I think their point was focused on (1) the folklore of golf course management, and (2) rapid change disguised as "progress". Progress sells product. They seemed, in my visit with them that day, frustrated by the cost of it all. Maybe, beneath the surface, they were wishing less was spent on advertising and sales budgets and more on good solid documentation.

Think of the graduate degrees there are to be earned in that area of "folklore"—what works and what doesn't. A new professor could build a program on that area alone.

As an editor, it is rewarding to read the first line of Jim's letter. Students and editors are lucky to have faculty like Wayne Kussow—the two students who did the research summarized in those two articles did so under Wayne's tutorship. Students in his program receive excellent classroom instruction, good golf course experience around Wisconsin and the chance to do some original science in the laboratory and greenhouse. He is to be complimented by us and thanked by his students. 🏌️