

Champions Demand Good Golf Turf

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FOR a period approaching fifteen years, I have been associated with the Oakmont Country Club and during the first season our putting greens were not in a very healthy condition. The greens had very little top soil, so that the growth was thin and during the hot weather, the greens were difficult to keep from burning out on account of not being able to retain the necessary moisture.

Building Up the Surface

I believe our top soil, at that time, was not more than one inch, while today we have more than four inches, brought up gradually by this process of top dressing. I believe this has been the most important feature in building up our putting greens to their present high standard. Top dressing is a very important detail of maintenance because of its nourishment to plant life, and its application produces true putting surfaces by smoothing out depressions. Greenkeepers should not hesitate in using compost, providing it is well decomposed and free from weeds, as the plant food it provides is natural and cannot be obtained in an artificial fertilizer.

Don't Force Greens Too Much

For the past several years we have used only compost and sulphate of ammonia on the putting greens. Sulphate of ammonia is quick in action and care should be taken in its use. The idea of fertilizing every two weeks

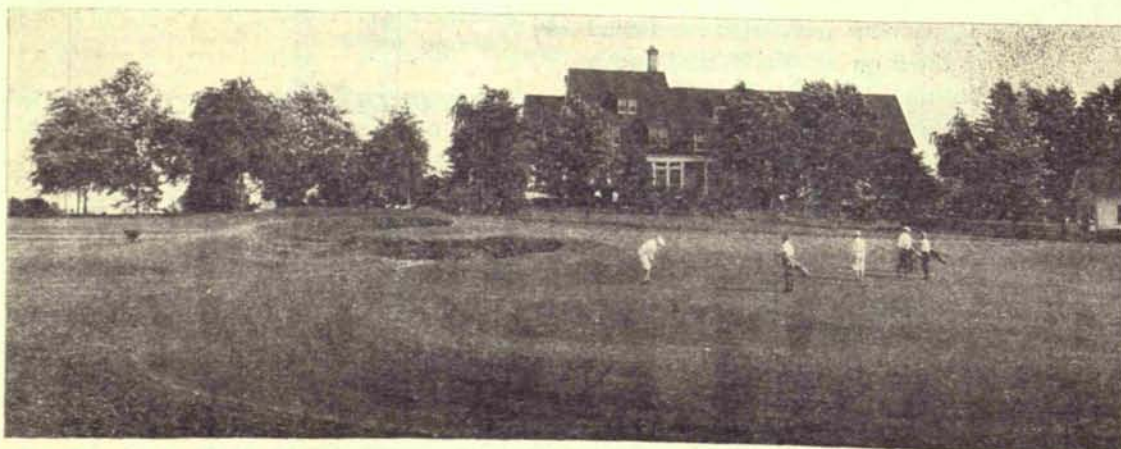
is, in my opinion, wrong. Too much application produces coarse grass and slows up the putting greens, a condition which the majority of golf players dislike. A greenkeeper should recognize when his greens need this stimulant. At Oakmont we use eight to ten pounds per green and use three applications a year. Sulphate is valuable for several reasons. It causes an acidity of soil which is necessary to the growing of fine grass; valuable as a fertilizer, it also discourages the growth of weeds and acts as a deterrent to worms.

Fairways Fertilized Regularly

The condition of the Oakmont course for the last several years has been such that it requires very little preparation to stage a championship. This is because of constant superintendence and the fact that most of the holes are provided with two or more tees—which require almost as much attention as putting greens. Markers and cups should be changed daily.

The Oakmont fairways are fertilized in the spring and again in the fall with a mixture of bone meal and sulphate of ammonia, three hundred pounds and two hundred pounds respectively, to an acre.

During the last ten years we have practically remodeled most of the putting greens in keeping with modern conditions. I shall be glad to set forth a few of these changes in a later article.



Chipping onto the Eighteenth at Oakmont