

University Students as Greensmen

By T. K. McCLENAHAN
Greenkeeper, Mayfair Golf and Country Club, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada



T. K. McClenahan

UNLIKE most of the other writers in the *National Greenkeeper* I cannot start by telling you of my past experience as a greenkeeper, this being my first position as a greenkeeper. I worked when a boy with my father on a gentleman's estate in the north of Ireland. One season on a cricket grounds, and one season on a football ground, was all I ever had to do with turf until I came to Canada.

I started work here the same year that the Mayfair Golf and Country Club opened. At the end of the second year I was given charge of the grounds, and like old Irish whiskey the grounds and I have both improved with age.

What I am going to write is not intended for the men whose articles in the *National Greenkeeper* have given me so much help—in particular Mr. John Morley, Mr. O. J. Noer, and others—but I write in the hope that it will help someone who, like myself, has newly joined the Association, and is up against it for men and tools.

Playing Season Short in Alberta

Our seasons here are very short, usually from the 16th of April to the 15th of October,—there is never much growth before May. Four men cut, top-dress and apply sulphate of ammonia to the greens. They start to cut each morning. Our greens are cut each day during the growing season—about ten a. m. Before starting to cut, two of these men, with a barrel truck and pump, spray two greens with sulphate of ammonia. This is done every work day except Saturday. Allowing for



Four of the Mayfair Greensmen, all University Students

Saturdays and Sundays you will see that each of our greens gets an application every two weeks.

Before adopting this method we tried putting the sulphate in compost; also putting it on with a watering can, but we find our present way best. We use a very fine spray. The same two men use this spraying outfit all the time, adjusting the spray so that each barrellful covers the green twice. We use sulphate of ammonia from the first of June to the end of August. With sulphate of ammonia, and also with compost it is my belief that small doses and frequent applications are best.

Daily Inspection of Mowers

While these men are spraying one of the other men is smoothing out mats and trimming around tees, while the fourth is doing any odd jobs that are required. At 9:45 they return to the tool shed and get their machines. Our machines are inspected, and, if necessary, adjusted each morning. These four men usually finish in time to clean their machines before closing time. At this junction I might state that all men employed on the greens are University students; in fact with two exceptions our staff is made up of students. Moreover employing the same men season after season has a lot to do with keeping the course in fine shape. These men all play golf and for this reason like to do their work so that other golfers can find no fault with it.

One man looks after bunkers, traps, and cutting of tees. I hope our Chairman of Greens reads this. We should really have two men for this work. I think a bunker or trap should always look as neat as a green. This bunker man cuts all grass around the bunkers, trims the edge, hoes out all weeds and finishes up by raking over with a rake made from an old hay mower knife.

The other two men are teamsters; one having charge of the fairway mower. He used to have two three-unit, one-horse machines, but three years ago we built a

frame ourselves to carry five units. It has been a great success and is still going strong. In this way we get a man for other work. During June, July and August, we keep this fairway mower running all the time. The other teamster does all the odd jobs requiring a team; cutting rough, hauling top-dressing, building compost piles, sanding boxes, etc.

During the hot months we have an extra man watering greens at night. He attends to nine greens each night, working every night except Saturday. In this way the greens get a good watering three times a week.

Regular Top Dressing and Often

I now come to a subject in which I am keenly interested—top-dressing with compost. You often hear said that we have not time to top-dress. This shows lack of understanding inasmuch as a green that does not get top-dressed regularly will require far more attention in other ways,—for instance, weeds getting into greens owing to thin turf. We have very little time to spare here, but we manage to top-dress five, and sometimes six, greens each week, using screened compost of one third manure, one third soil, and one third sharp sand. We try to get top-dressing finished on Monday or Tuesday, and in this way the greens are always in good shape for the week-end. During the season there are always large crowds from Saturday to Sunday night.

When we top-dress we take all the men except a man on the fairway mower. The spare teamster hauls the compost from the screen to the greens; five men spread it on evenly with flat shovels. When they are finished spreading one man goes over the green with a wire mat, and next day all the greens are cut as usual. Very little, if any, of the top dressing can be seen, and play

is never interfered with. It takes about five hours to do this job, and it must be understood that while this is being done all other work is stopped. However, it is time well spent.

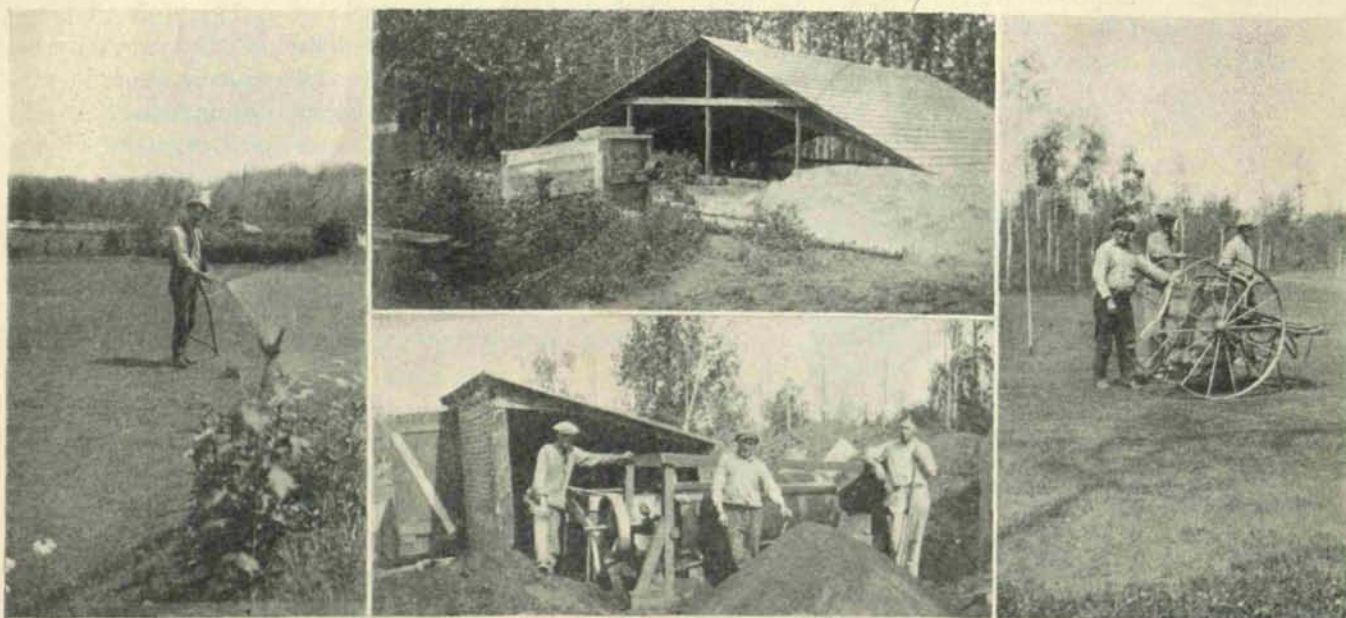
Compost Shed and Screen

Up to the last season we had a great deal of trouble getting enough compost screened and so we decided to build a rotary screen, mostly from junk. Last year we turned it with a crank, but this season we strengthened both screen and frame, and now use a gasoline engine for driving. When any of the men are looking for a job, and cannot find one, they go to the compost pile and start the screen. The screen will handle compost as fast as three or four men can shovel, and in this way we always have a pile of screened compost on hand. The only drawback is wet weather, and to offset this we have built a large compost shed that will hold enough for one season.

Planning to Plant Vegetatively

As to the grass on the greens, we have bents from having seeded with South German mixed bents, and Prince Edward Island bent, or Brown Top, as it is called. Our Green Committee has planned to plant all greens to Washington bent, and we have a nursery, roughly about 60,000 square feet. This is the fourth season we have used ammonium sulphate and we find that it makes weed control much easier.

In conclusion I would like to add we have always had go-ahead officials, and members who are proud of their course, and a Pro who is always ready and willing to help. This coupled with the loyalty and ability of the present ground staff, makes the greenkeeper's work here very pleasant indeed.



Sprinkling Flower Border, Practice Green at Mayfair

Upper, New Compost Shed; Lower, Home-Made Compost Machine, Used at Mayfair Golf and Country Club, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Pepping Up the Mayfair Greens with Sulphate of Ammonia