

An Educational Visit To Mid-Lothian

BY JOHN MacGREGOR

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THREE years ago I visited the Mid-Lothian Country Club, Jack Patterson, the greenkeeper took me on a tour of the course. During our conversation I remarked to Jack that I had never seen so many worm casts on fairways, in fact, when we got to the clubhouse my feet ached. I would just as soon have walked on gravel.

Jack told me he wormed his greens two and three times a week—just think of the enormous expense of worm eradication every year. He also told me then he was experimenting with arsenate of lead.

I sympathized with him after seeing his course, and realized what he had been up against for the past six years.

I had the pleasure of visiting the same course in August this year at a meeting of the Mid-West Greenkeepers Assn. Great things had been accomplished. There was a beautiful turf on the fairways and worm casts were

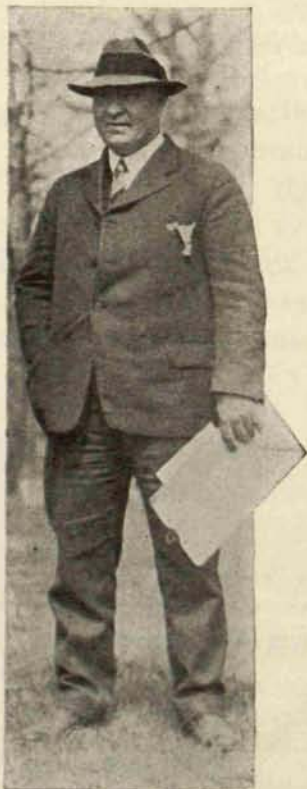
conspicuous by their absence. The greens were very fine, but not a sign of a worm cast. I immediately went after Jack for information.

I might add before I carry on, that Jack Patterson had a lot of courage to attempt what he did. The greens at Mid-Lothian were seeded, and poa annua had quite a hold on both greens and fairways.

This is what I got from Jack. He talked drainage to the directors quite often before they took it seriously, but eventually a drainage system was installed. This was the first step in the program which Jack had in the back of his head. The drainage had the desired affect; it eliminated the soggy condition which previously had been the case in the spring, permitting the whole course to be opened earlier than heretofore.

Then Jack started on the next item on the program, arsenate of lead, and found this to be a more difficult subject than drainage. It

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was only through experimenting that he was finally given permission to lead the greens. The approaches were done at the same time and the result was so successful and pronounced that when one walked off the fairway on to the approach it was the same as walking on gravel and then suddenly stepping on to a carpet.

This decided the members on arsenate of lead for worms, and permission was given Jack to treat all the fairways. The amount used on the greens was 5 lbs. to 1,000 sq. ft.

Five and a half tons of arsenate of lead was used for the treatment of the fairways. There were several areas where as much as 14 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. was used before worm eradication was complete.

The most remarkable feature of the arsenate of lead treatments was the fact that the poa annua had not been affected at all; in fact it was just as healthy as it was when I saw it three years ago. I confess I have been a little timid about using arsenate of lead, as my greens are about 70% poa annua but I will not hesitate now.

The next item on the program was the sprinkling system, which proved to be the easiest part of it. This has been installed and was operated this year.

The combined items on this program have worked out I think, even better than Jack had anticipated. It is a revelation in greenkeeping, and took more than ordinary courage to carry such a program through.

If you are not a member of your local Greenkeepers association you are missing plenty. If you are, keep your dues paid up and attend the meetings; I learn something every time I attend.

Jack is a member of the Mid-West Greenkeepers Assn., also of The N. A. G. A. He has held positions as Pro-greenkeeper, (his present position is such) but to me he is a Greenkeeper, I never think of him as a Pro.

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