

Steaming Loam

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I have heard the process of steaming loam criticized by different authorities on turf and greenkeeping. Others I have talked with feel much the same as I do about this steaming process, but cannot get their club members or chairmen interested.

My experience with this steaming of loam covers only four years or seasons, but I have in this short period seen a marked difference in the cleanliness of my greens. Before we started steaming loam it was necessary for me to have men weeding greens; this is an eyesore, and we have now eliminated such worries!

I have given this process of steaming a strict test, and have found by experimenting that 99% of all weed seed are killed. I also believe that most of the weed seed are planted with the compost dressing and a very small amount is blown on the greens from the fairways and rough.

I cannot say that this sterilization process has made our greens immune from brown-patch, as I have my troubles during that season, but I believe it helps, as the attacks are never serious.

In the steaming of loam it is necessary to have a good equipment, and to make it as economically as possible. We have an upright boiler (housed in), capable of 200 pounds steam pressure, but 80 pounds is all that is required to start the steaming or cooking. The box I have built to hold the loam has a cement floor and a waterproof cover; this is essential as the loam is left in the box two or three days to cool and dry. There are five six-foot lengths of inch and quarter pipe leading from a header with holes about every inch through which the steam is forced. In order to steam four yards of loam and get results, about two hours' time is required.

The cost of steaming for the season is very small considering that it is not necessary to have men on my greens weeding. There is always plenty of dead wood in cleaning up a golf course, sufficient to fire the boiler each season.

Those interested in this steaming process of sterilization of compost can inspect our plant at Weston at any time.

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