

How I Treated My Greens

By HARRY A. BURKHARDT, *Greenkeeper*
Manakiki Country Club, Willoughby, Ohio

FIFTEEN or twenty years ago someone decided that a greenkeeper didn't have a thing to do during the winter but sit by the fire and talk over the past summer's troubles. I'd like to show the fellow who made that mistake my working schedule for the next four months; I certainly think he would change his mind. So don't think this is idle fireside gossip of "what might be"—it is an actual experience with outside conditions.

The last two summers I have been doing a little work on the side to determine a few facts about grass for myself. Two years ago I ran some soil tests on my greens, measured the root growth and took note of the color and strength of the grass blades. Checking back through the results I found four greens linked very close together as far as results of the tests.

I watched these four greens closely that first summer, but I did not treat them any differently than the other greens on the course. Three of these four greens came through without a bit of trouble while the fourth one went to pieces after a heavy rain in June, and it was a long, slow task bringing it back into shape.

This bad luck seemed to disapprove my theory that

the right kind of feed in the soil would develop a strong, healthy grass plant able to resist a number of our pest attacks without severe injury to the grass.

Just to give you an idea of what I was working with I will tell you that very few of my greens are underdrained and hardly any that will surface drain. Two of the three greens that came through the summer without trouble are surface drained and one is both surface drained and has underdrainage. The one I had trouble with had neither.

That fall I went to work and drained my sick green and this summer it stayed on the track and ran true to form.

These four greens are in different sections of the course, each one under a different local condition, but each came through in great style. I don't mean to say that they were not attacked by Brown Patch this year because they certainly had it everytime any of the rest did, but it did not go deep enough to scar or mar the surface of the green. Just the very tips of the grass seemed to be affected so that after mowing, all traces of the patch were gone.

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This is the way the test read two years ago: P. H. value 5.6 to 6.0, P205 250 to 350 pounds per acre, organic material 1 to 1½ parts in 10; root growth 3 to 4 inches; color of grass, shiny green, and stems stiff and sturdy. I might also say that greens that run high in organic material showed a little less P205 and vice versa.

Evidently if I have found anything worthwhile it will show itself next year, if someone is willing to try and keep a few greens under similar conditions. Some place along the line should be a medium of organics and phosphorus in the soil to produce the right kind of healthy growth.

I don't want anyone to believe that I don't use nitrogen because I do, both quick and slow available but all my greens had the same proportion of nitrogen per square foot and there weren't any that showed the result of the four special greens, so I have come to believe that the amount of organic material and phosphorus has something to do with their success.

Spring Work

By JOSEPH BALL, *Greenkeeper*
Chartier Heights Country Club, Grafton, Pa.

AFTER the snow has cleared off in early March, I usually make a thorough examination of my course and note very carefully the winter damage so I have no guessing as to where to start.

I usually take the temperature of the ground at various times. In the meantime my men are busy mixing fertilizers and topdressing. And when the temperature rises outside sixty to seventy degrees and the ground is fifty I begin fertilizing. You will notice your grass responding much quicker and at the same time avoiding waste by spring rains, leaching and washing away your fertilizer before it has had time to act on the plants.

It is unfair to always blame fertilizer for your troubles. You can underfeed and overfeed; always let your greens a little on the hungry side. Pay close attention and you will soon note that it will become familiar to you. Let up immediately and your greens go into the dormant stage for now they need rest not abuse. This advice is more for the young greenkeeper.

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Give your greens a good sulphating early in the spring as soon as the ground is warm and before the weed seeds germinate. This will cut down your weed picking expenses. I have cut my weed picking expenses from \$20 a day to 75 cents a day. When you start out in the spring let your first thought be greens and fairways; other work can stand.

I am sending you a picture of one of the little things a greenkeeper has to do outside of greenkeeping. A rustic bridge spanning a ravine on No. 13 fairway, 205 ft. long, 16 ft. high in the middle, built by my own men at a cost of \$316 only and supervised by myself.

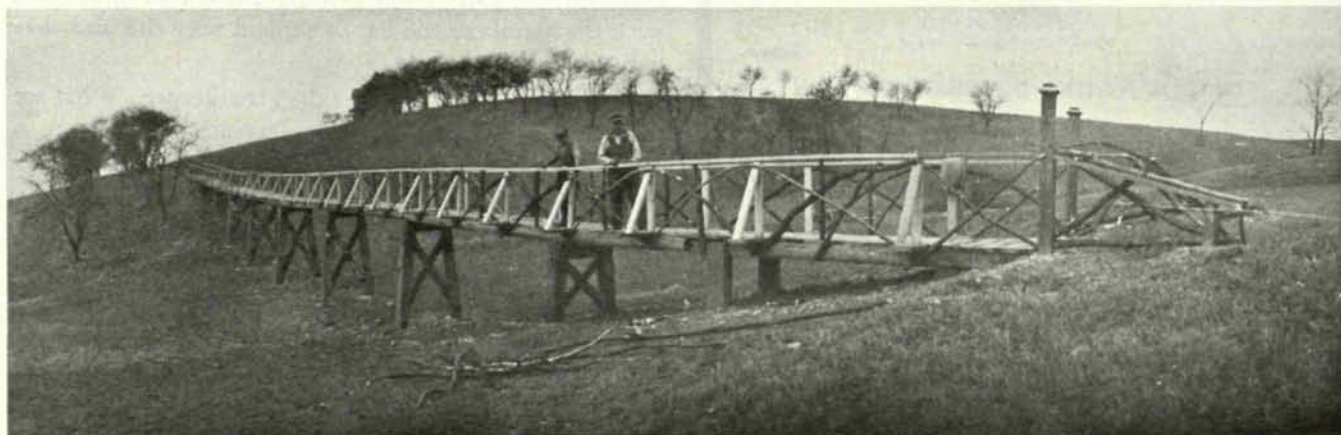


PHOTO OF RUSTIC BRIDGE BUILT BY JOSEPH BALL AT THE CHARTIER HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB