

JB COMMENTS - EARTHWORM HAPPENINGS!

Other than rabbits, earthworms (genus *Lumbricus*) were one of the earliest serious pests on golf course turfs in the United Kingdom for several centuries. Consequently, golf was principally a game played on the seaside linksland of Scotland. Attempts to construct golf courses on what was termed "upland" or clay soil resulted in a serious problem with earthworms, that occurred primarily on the putting greens during the mild winters. Because of the disruption of the surface by earthworms, upland golf courses would be unplayable for more than six months out of a year. Also, the amount of soil pushed up causes difficulty in mowing and rolling.

The first successful toxicants for earthworms started to be used in the late 1800's. Irritants were subsequently developed, such as mowery meal - a bean extract from India. The irritant forced the earthworms to the surface where they were raked into piles and physically removed from the putting greens in wheelbarrows.

These initial materials were a key breakthrough, in that they facilitated course construction and year-round play on golf courses in the upland clay areas of England and Scotland. Additional control materials were subsequently developed, and therefore earthworms have not been a significant problem on putting greens for most of the 20th Century.

However, this situation could change because the environmental quality agency in the United Kingdom has essentially eliminated the use of all effective materials utilized in earthworm control, including the irritants. Thus, it appears they may have come full circle back, with the earthworm again becoming a serious major pest problem disrupting play on golf courses in the United Kingdom. Hopefully, a new method can be found to prevent earthworm activity from disrupting the surface quality of putting greens.

UPCOMING JB VISITATIONS:

July 7 to 12 - Ohio.

July 17 to 19 - Vancouver, British Columbia.

July 26 to 31 - Ireland.

September 8 to 12 - New York.

NEW PUBLICATION AVAILABLE:

65th Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference Proceedings. Volume 24. 278 pages. Michigan State University Extension. (1995).

The publication contains 52 papers presented before the Michigan Turfgrass Conference in 1995. It is organized in five subject areas of: MSU Research Reports, Environmental Issues, Golf, Lawn Care, and Athletic Field. The articles focus on cool-season turfgrasses and conditions.

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