



NEWS LETTER

June, 1930.

Vol. 2, No. 6.

"The world is blessed most by men who do things, and not by those who merely talk about them".

—James Oliver.

We are very pleased to see the concrete endorsement which the Greenkeepers Club of New England has given the work being done by the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Experiment Stations, in appointing committees to work with the officials at these Stations. We feel that this is a decided step forward. The work which Prof. Dickinson and his colleagues have already done is widely known and the acidity experiments conducted at the R. I. Station for the last twenty-five years are the basis of much that has been done since. There is much work which can be done best at such places, under eyes of scientifically trained men, if they are helped by the greenkeepers themselves, the men in the field.

We would like to see men from the Experiment Stations conduct surveys in the field, finding out from the greenkeepers themselves just what their real problems are, and what help they need. We would like to see a program of experimentation, under supervision of Experimental Stations officials, carried out on every golf course, and the results interpreted. And to get all this we would like to see all golf organizations and clubs contribute to make this constructive work possible. The opportunity is at hand to get real assistance. Shall we use it?

WILL YOU send in any news of Brown-patch for the next issue of NEWSLETTER?

This NEWSLETTER is published monthly by the Greenkeepers Club of New England, and sent free to its members and their Greens' Chairmen. Subscription price ten cents a copy, or a dollar a year.

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312 Mt. Pleasant St., Fall River, Mass.

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SOILS AND SUB-SOILS

Present day Greenskeepers are expected to produce a healthy growth of grass to withstand the ravages of golfer's footwear throughout the year. In many cases the soil on golf courses is of a heavy clayey nature more suitable for producing bricks than for getting a first class turf on it. In other cases it consists of a pure sandy loam that will not retain either fertilizer or moisture in any shape or form. Between these two extremes we find golf courses laid out in Peat, Gravel, Chalk and Loam. Now a greenskeeper, to be successful, must have a working knowledge of these soils; in a word he must have an elementary idea of the origin, composition and general classifications of soils; in short, a slight understanding of Geology. Let me explain here. Now, the actual surface of the earth as we see it to-day in the cultivated parts of the country consists of mold or vegetable soil; in other parts we see large tracts of barren rocks which vary in character, some are brimstone, sandstone, granite, slate, etc. The most common must have originally been formed by and with water, others have been formed by fire. Now bearing these simple facts in mind it is well to remember that rocks are the mineral constituents of the earth, beneath any mold or soil that may have accumulated upon them and that the most of the soils that we find in our golf courses are originally derived from rocks and many of these important properties of the soil can be traced to the rocks beneath them. It is well known from the best authorities that every kind of vegetable soil was once rock which by the repeated action of heat, cold, air, and water has been broken down to a fine state of dust, mud or sand. This process is known as weathering. But vegetation has a good deal to do with

this also, for doubtless you have noticed small lichens growing on the face of rocks exposed on the cliff or quarry. We wonder how any plant can live in such a position, but the secret of it is that the lichens draw a good deal of the nourishment necessary for their existence from the atmosphere. Now all this is weathering and goes to illustrate how soils are formed.

Having said so much with regard to the origin of soils I want next to bring your attention to the distinction between sub-soils and top soils. This is easy to detect, the top soil acquires its richness in humus mainly from the decaying of deeper roots, also to the work of earthworms. Top soils are generally rich in humus and the elements of plant life. Fortunate indeed is the greenskeeper whose course is laid out on loam, the richest soil and well supplied with humus and the other elements of plant foods. These soils are usually deep and not compact, thus admitting of the percolation of water, consequently very little drainage is necessary. At the same time they retain moisture during the summer months and do not dry up too rapidly. The first necessity for a good soil on a golf green I consider to be one that will hold moisture and the second, one that has power to suck up water from lower levels by capillary attraction. Of the requirements sand has the least water retaining or absorbent power, clay has four times and humus six times the capacity of sand to hold moisture. When water drains away from loam or clay the drainage is never complete for these soils after being watered retain some little moisture, but on very sandy soil you lose even that little amount of moisture. The moral of this is to change that soil, either by fertilizer or top dressings of good loam. With regards to great cohesion, I am convinced that this is sometimes brought about by over rolling with a heavy roller in some shape or form, thus causing bad drainage, sourness and coldness.

Having said so much about soils I think that you will readily agree that the ideal soil for producing a suitable turf for golfing purposes the whole year through, having due regard to climatic conditions during the year, is a medium loam. For such a soil is fine grained in texture and has the power to lift water easily by capillary attraction during dry summers, at the same time is sufficiently open for air to enter freely and water to percolate during

wet weather, and in such a soil you do not get the bad faults of clayey or sandy soil.

There are three things which are absolutely essential for the growth of good grass, 1st, humus; 2nd, warmth; 3rd, moisture. To sum up in a few simple words it means you must have nitrogen in your dressing which must change into nitrate before it is available for the roots of the grass plants.

Lastly, I'll conclude that these are my own simple convictions in regard to soils and foundations for a good course and greens.

BILL LINDSAY,
Manchester (N. H.) C. C.

PREPARING COMPOST TOPDRESSING

At this time scarcely two greenkeepers prepare compost in the same way. Here at Cohasse we are very fortunate in having plenty of good fertile land adjoining the club grounds, this having previously been a farm. Therefore we can readily and economically avail ourselves of sufficient topsoil with which to build up our compost piles.

The base of the pile is a thick layer of topsoil, which is then covered by manure, then more topsoil, and so on, until the pile has been built the desired size. One part manure is used with two parts topsoil. This pile is turned with forks once or twice a year to mix it well together, we using an older supply which we keep on hand.

We have a large barn nearby in which we keep several yards of dry compost, and here also we have a Royer compost machine, and on rainy days, or during other broken time, we run this material through that it may be ready when needed. The Royer machine was not designed to screen compost but to pulverize it and separate the large or medium sized stones from the finer material, but by placing a large screen of five-eighths mesh about five feet from the front of the machine, we get very satisfactory results, as nearly all stones large enough to be objectionable rebound off the screen and are thus prevented from becoming mixed through the topdressing. Certainly, a few stones up to the size of a white bean go through the screen, but I have found it best to sweep the greens after each application of compost no matter what type of screen is used. For power we

have a one and a half horse power electric motor attached to the scaffolding above.

Two men work this machine to the best advantage; one to pass the compost to within a few feet of the machine, while the other shovels it into the hopper. In this manner we can prepare three yards of material per hour, which seems to be a very great saving over the old methods of screening. Also the compost prepared in this way is so much finer and can therefore be spread more easily.

I am well aware that few greenkeepers have such a valuable supply of topsoil available and in many instances are handicapped by lack of shed room for storage, etc. which so simplifies the problem of preparing compost.

ERNEST B. LORD,
Cohasse Country Club.

FIELD DAY AT RHODE ISLAND EXPERIMENT STATION

The first Field Day for greenkeepers and green chairmen was held at the Rhode Island Experiment Station, Kingston, R. I., on Monday, May 26. After a short meeting at which acting President John Barlow welcomed the gathering to the college, and Dr. Odland explained the program for the day, the gathering visited the experimental plots. There are several series of plots, including the fertilizer plots established in 1905. Other more recent plots include variety and strain tests, fertilizer experiments, seed production tests, etc. These are all very interesting and should be visited by many.

Following lunch, a greenkeepers' meeting and forum was held, with Director B. E. Gilbert as chairman. The principal speaker was Prof. Lawrence S. Dickinson of the Massachusetts Agricultural College. Prof. Dickinson pointed out that greenkeepers often do not realize what they are operating—"a factory"—a big investment with small personnel. The chances of error are much greater because of the small personnel, and unfortunately the error doesn't show up immediately usually, and because of this, it takes time to correct errors. Possibly some greenkeepers are trying too hard to produce good turf, overlooking many little things for good greens. Real problem is not only to produce good turf, but

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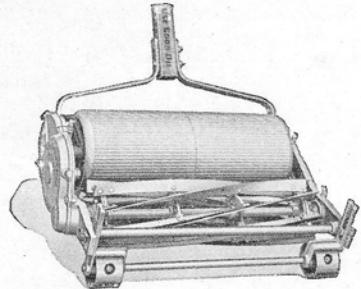
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also happiness and pleasure. Must work with nature, not against nature. All grasses mature and then drift along and dry up for the winter. If we postpone maturity we are helping the golf course for the time being, but we must watch out for the future. Prof. Dickinson advised not to seed on thick turf, as the seed may germinate, but will probably not live. On poor soil seed alone will not work, it needs fertilizer also.

Mr. A. N. Peckham, who is the largest grower of bent grass seed in the East, told of his experiences as a farmer growing bent grass seed.

Following the forum there were demonstrations of golf course machinery and equipment by several dealers, among whom were Woodworth Bradley, Edward Lohr of the N. E. Toro Co. and John Nyhan.

Mr. Peckham led a trip to a few of his fields where he produces bent seed. Nursery rows of stolons of several strains were seen, and a large field of Velvet bent was of especial interest.

A trip to the partially completed Bonnet Shores Golf Course under leadership of Mr. Woodworth Bradley completed the day's program.

The officials of the R. I. Experiment Station should be complimented upon their first Field Day and its interesting program.

AN APPRECIATION

On Sunday, May 4, 1930, the Cranston Country Club suffered a loss by fire of the Professional's shop, locker room, repair shop, tool house, barn, and a full line of tools and machinery used for golf course work. This was a handicap hard to explain. However, realizing that work must be done as usual, I went to work taking an inventory of tools destroyed. I put in an order to the New England Toro Company three hours after the fire, and the next day at five o'clock I was pleased to see nearly the full order delivered by the Providence Toro representative, Mr. Edward Lohr. As usual we were ready to mow greens and fairways on time. I feel very grateful to the New England Toro Company, its manager, Mr. Clapper, and Mr. Lohr, who spared no expense to help us in our great emergency. Our new building is now nearing completion, and we are in hopes of moving in very soon. I wanted to put in some new

greens to start the next nine holes, but the fire has prevented new work so far; but, I still hope to do some seeding this year, and will do so if nothing else happens.

ROLAND F. ROBINSON,
Cranston Country Club.

ANNUAL LAWN DAY AT M. A. C.

Will you be among the hundreds present at the Annual Lawn Day at the Massachusetts Agricultural College on July 31? Keep the date in mind!

The program follows:

Meetings held in French Hall, Room F
Thursday, July 31, 1930

9:30 a. m.—"The Lawn Mower"

Lawrence S. Dickinson

10:30 a. m.—"The Lawn, From

Foundation to Turf"

Lawrence S. Dickinson

11:30 a. m.—Discussion period on

Typical Lawn Troubles

12:15 p. m.—Luncheon at the College
Dining Hall (Cafeteria)

1:30 p. m.—"Lawn Fertilizers"

Howard B. Sprague, New Jersey
State Agricultural College

3:00 p. m.—Inspection of Turf Plots

4:15 p. m.—Livestock Parade

JUNE MEETING

The June meeting was held at the Unicorn Country Club, Stoneham, Mass., on June 2. At a business meeting following lunch, a joint meeting of the club and the Connecticut Greenkeepers Association was discussed.

Committees were appointed to confer and cooperate with the Mass. Experiment Station, and with the R. I. Experiment Station. The Massachusetts committee is James McCormack, Chr., T. W. Swanson and Charles Parker; the Rhode Island committee, R. Wallace Peckham, Chr., Thomas Galvin and James Lawson.

At the tournament held in the afternoon, prizes were won by:

Low gross, Jim McCormack, gross of 80; largest gross, Charles Parker, Belmont, 119; 2nd largest gross, M. Burnett, Albemarle, 118; Guest prize, T. Howe, Tatnuck; 1st low net, John McDonough, Salem, 103, 35, 68; 2nd low net, E. B. Lord, Southbridge, 105, 32, 73; 3rd low net, H. J. Moran, 93, 18, 75; 4th low net, Paul Wanberg, Weston, 105, 30, 75.

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