



UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION GREEN SECTION

Mid-Continent Turfletter

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* This is the initial issue of the Mid-Continent Turfletter. *
* It is being sent to superintendents and Green Committee *
* chairmen of all USGA member clubs in the states of Ohio, *
* Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South *
* Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming and *
* Kentucky. *
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* This Regional Turfletter is a part of the USGA Green *
* Section Regional Turf Service which has been offered *
* recently in the states listed above. The Turfletter is *
* published every 60 days and two copies are sent to each *
* club which subscribes to the Regional Turf Service. It *
* would be a pleasure to have YOU on our permanent mailing *
* list. *
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* Should you need more information about the USGA Green *
* Section Regional Turf Service, please write to either of *
* the offices shown on the letterhead. *
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Your Disease Control Program

There appears to be a definite advantage to starting a fungicide spray program early in the season. If you should go out today and examine a few leaves of grass from one of your greens, it is very likely that you will find diseased spots on them. These may not be caused by serious pathogens but they probably contribute to a poor color on your greens. There are many, many organisms capable of causing turf diseases lying dormant in your turf. They are simply waiting for the proper conditions to occur so they may start to work. A regular fungicide spray program, if started early, may "head off" some of the disease activity.

It will be helpful if you are able to associate certain weather conditions with the activity of each major disease. This knowledge helps in the choice of a fungicide. In seasons when several organisms may be active, it may be desirable to use one of the newly developed fungicides which is capable of controlling a wide range of disease producing fungi.

THE COLLAR OF THE GREEN

Throughout a large part of the Mid-Continent Region, the collar, fringe, edge, or apron, of the putting green is one of the most troublesome areas on the golf course. It may sometimes seem strange to find excellent greens and good fairways, with poor collars between these areas. Perhaps an examination of the factors that contribute to this condition will help in the solution of the problem.

Traffic

Some may contend that traffic is heavier on the putting green than on the collar. This contention is probably correct. But what kind of traffic is it? Mowers being operated on a putting green usually travel in a straight line. On the collar, they usually are being turned.

The manner of turning a mower may be quite important. Does your greensman throttle down and make a wide turn on the collar or does he simply push down on the handle and turn sharply without slowing the machine? If the latter method is practiced, a great deal of damage may be done by the drive rollers which continue to spin and bruise grass while the mower is being turned.

Fertilizer

Is the collar included when the green is fertilized? The collar is more intensively maintained than fairway areas; it usually gets more water; it probably needs more fertilizer.

Soil Mixture

Most greens have been built of specially prepared and treated soil. Very often the collar has had little attention from this standpoint. It may have been constructed of soil taken from bunker excavations or the screenings from the soil used on greens. Perhaps the collar is more apt to become compacted because of the fact that it is in poorer physical condition.

Watering

It is extremely difficult to water properly the collars of putting greens. Many of the "rolls" in putting greens start from mounds or depressions just off the edge of the greens. These design features lead to high dry places and low wet areas on the collars.

The placement of sprinkler outlets is not always proper for uniform irrigation of the "off-the-green" areas. Usually the designer of a sprinkler system is concerned with adequate and uniform watering of the putting surface and with keeping water out of nearby sand traps. These are very important considerations but if the designer does not also attach considerable importance to the uniform watering of collars, these areas may suffer.

Thatch

Most superintendents are very conscious of the evils of thatch on putting greens. If a grass tends to build up a thatch on a green, and if that grass spreads to the collar, it is quite likely to form a thatch there. It is no less harmful to a collar than to a putting green. It will contribute to localized dry spots and harbor disease insect pests.

Disease and Insect Control

Collars probably rank next to greens in their need for careful and skillful management. They are subjected to many of the same disease and insect attacks that occur on greens. It seems desirable to treat these areas in much the same way that greens are treated. Insecticide and fertilizer treatments should be carried out to include the area immediately adjacent to the green. Fungicide treatments should include collar areas, especially if collars are planted to the same type grass that is on the green. However, if collars are in bluegrass turf and greens have bentgrass turf on them, one might experience an attack of *Helminthosporium* on the collar without having disease difficulty on the green. In such a case one would be justified in treating collars alone.

Mowing Heights

In recent years there has been a trend toward the mowing of collars at an intermediate height. This practice is almost universally pleasing to golfers. It has the effect of enlarging the putting surface. The height of mowing on collars is dictated largely by the type of grass used and to some extent by the equipment available for the job.

The important thing, from the standpoint of good turf, is to fit the mowing practices to the type of grass. Bentgrass and Bermuda collars can be mowed to one-half inch, but such a practice might ruin bluegrass. If, however, some other factor, such as the demand of golfers, decrees that the grass shall be mowed at a certain height, it may be necessary to plant the type of grass that will take the treatment you must give it.

How Important is the Collar

Has the collar of the putting green been accorded the significance that it deserves? It is extremely disheartening to a golfer to play a little less than perfect shot to a green and find himself a few feet off the green with a "cuppy" lie. Perhaps he has some justification for complaint.

There are a good many golf courses in the country that have excellent fairways, and scarcely a blemish on the putting green. Yet the golfer who is just barely off the green is rewarded with a poor lie. A campaign to improve collars would appear to be a worthy challenge.

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