
Why Fescue Does Not Make Good Putting Turf

It has long been observed that fescue is not satisfactory for putting green purposes. The reason for this is that it will not stand up under the close cutting that is necessary. This matter has been explained in some detail by Dr. R. A. Oakley in his article on “Morphology” which appeared in the “Journal of the American Society of Agronomy,” Vol. 16, No. 9, September, 1924, and from which the following is quoted:

“Putting greens must have turf of fine texture and of uniform surface. To accomplish this, close cutting is necessary and, with the modern putting green mower, it is possible literally to shave the grass down to the very surface of the ground. Because of the urge of the players for fast greens, the greenkeeper is inclined almost unknowingly to cut the grass exceedingly close. The bent grasses thrive under this treatment, but red fescue does not. The latter will withstand close cutting for a time and then in the language of the greenkeeper it ‘commences to go back.’ The common treatment has been to apply a topdressing of compost, or some quick acting nitrogenous fertilizer, or both. Careful studies have revealed the cause of the trouble. It is due to a peculiar morphological character of the red fescue plant. At the crown or base of each turfgrass plant, regardless of species, there is a short stem or axis made up of a number of unelongate internodes from which new shoots, with leaves, are continuously developing. In the bent and certain other species, these shoots may come from the very lowest buds. In the case of red fescue, the shoots that make the turf are produced from the upper part of the basal axis. Consequently, when the top of the basal axis is cut off by the mower few shoots develop from the lower nodes and the turf becomes thin. Topdressing and fertilizing to improve such a turf is merely treating symptoms. What is needed is to raise the mower so that the basal axis of the plant is not injured.”

Uncovered Compost Beds and Covered Compost Piles

If the location for an uncovered compost bed is carefully chosen comparatively little of the soluble fertilizing elements will be lost by leaching, and the bed can be turned frequently and very cheaply by the use of a team and harrow, thus hastening decomposition and destroying weed growth. On the other hand, a covered compost pile may be turned over or screened at any time, regardless of the weather; but decomposition and germination of weed seeds will not be so rapid and labor costs will be increased. The best practical method of storing and handling compost is probably a combination of these two methods. Build a compost bed, also a shed for storing screened compost only. When the compost is ready for use in top-