

Chaff-Head, a Dangerous Weed

By C. V. Piper

Chaff-head (*Achyranthes repens* L.) is a weed of tropical origin that has become established at several places in the South. It is reported from South Carolina and California, and we have seen it on golf courses at New Orleans and Houston.

The plant is a somewhat fleshy perennial and before blooming resembles certain chickweeds. The leaves are opposite, thickish, a little harsh to the touch, and in shape like those of mouse-ear chickweed or "Creeping Charley." When in bloom there are numerous nearly globose heads as large as a pea, whitish in color. At this stage it makes a very objectionable putting surface. Besides, the plants are inclined to heave, due perhaps to the dense mass of thick fleshy roots.



The plant as it appears in bloom;
natural size

A flowering branch; enlarged

CHAFF-HEAD (*Achyranthes repens* L.).

If not promptly eradicated the weed spreads with amazing rapidity, seeds being produced in immense numbers. No golf club should take chances with this weed. It is hardly fair to the neighboring golf clubs not to do everything possible to get rid of the pest. It should be cut out clean and burned, as if not destroyed the fleshy plants are very likely to grow again where they are thrown. No other satisfactory method of fighting this weed is known except the one described. It will probably take two or three years of work to get rid of the weed completely, especially if it has been allowed to produce seeds, which are easily scattered over the course, being carried on the shoes of players.