

Birds of the Golf Course

The Chipping Sparrow

By W. L. McAtee



The Chipping Sparrow

This familiar little red-capped sparrow is known as the chippy from its simple song, and as hair-bird from its preference for material with which to line its nest. Long hairs shed from the mane or tail of a horse are what it has sought in the past to coil up as the inner layer of its nest, and it will be interesting to observe what substitute the bird turns to in the many localities where horses are now becoming rarities. The chippy occurs in all parts of the United States and breeds in all but extreme southern districts. In northern states, the bird is an early

arrival in spring and at once announces its presence by its oft-repeated chipping song. It nests at no great height from the ground in shrubs and vines often near buildings. In early fall south-bound migrants collect and the loose flocks they form are often seen on fairways shifting from place to place like leaves fluttering before the wind.

Chipping sparrows frequent northern golf courses at all seasons except winter, and southern ones except midsummer. They feed upon both weed and insect pests. The seeds of foxtail, knotweed, chickweed, goose grass, and crabgrass are favorites among the vegetable items that make up three-fifths of the bird's food. Fully 200 seeds of crab-grass are known to have been taken at a single meal. Here is one of the birds then that helps to save the greenkeeping force some of the crawling about over greens and pulling seedlings of crabgrass.

This little bird also helps to reduce the insect enemies of golf courses, including in its bill of fare such grass devourers as the army worm and other caterpillars, grasshoppers, flea and leaf beetles, and clover leaf weevils; such grass suckers as plant lice, leaf hoppers,

and plant bugs; and such sappers of the turf as the clover root borer, white grubs, wire-worms and cut worms. It also preys upon burrowing bees and ants and the various small dung beetles that mine in putting greens and throw up those little hillocks of dirt that constantly interfere with good greenkeeping. The chippy does no harm, is beneficial in many ways, and withal is a very pleasant and sprightly neighbor

Daffodils for Golf Courses

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When winter has gone, when spring has arrived, and when the urge of the open is upon us, the pleasure of one's leisure in the open is intensified by nothing more than by pleasing vistas of quickening verdure. Much has been done to beautify our pleasure grounds with "shrubs," "annuals," and "perennials," but upon our golf courses especially there is a notable lack of use of all early spring bulbous flowering plants so effective, so attractive, and so conducive to one's enjoyment in early springtime when the conventional ornamental plantings of our landscapes are only just awakening from their winter lethargy.

This is not because of the cost of such an improvement, for the beautification of landscapes by the use of bulbous stocks, especially daffodils, is not prohibitive. Indeed, it may be doubted whether a comparable effect can be produced as cheaply for an equal length of time for the same money with any other group of plants. Besides, the effect is easily attained and requires little skill in the distribution and the arrangement of the plantings. About all that is needed is to mass-plant on informal lines in open waste or unoccupied spaces in the edge of woodland, around the base of shrubbery, in the border of glades, or similar situations.

The handling of such a naturalized planting is simplicity itself and when once established requires a minimum of care and expense. In open glades, where there is naturally more or less forest débris, there may be needed no attention whatever. Often mowing once a year is advisable and, so far as daffodils themselves are concerned, there will be a decided advantage in leaving the mowings lie where they fall to help smother out some of the native competitive growth.

In many situations, however, on golf courses where naturalized plantings of daffodils are desirable, mowing and removal of the mowings is necessary. This applies to exposed situations and edges of shrubbery plantings.

To make a success of a naturalized planting of daffodils over a long period, and none other is worth while, the bulbs should not be set on any portion of the course where constant close cropping of the grass cover is required. Such close cropping of the grass from the last half of June on, however, is permissible, but the foliage of the daffodil must have about two months' time after the flowering period to properly mature the bulb for flowering again the next year. It will be necessary, therefore, to confine naturalized plantings of daffodils on our courses to such situations as can be left without mowing from spring to late June. During the remainder of the year close mowing can be practiced with removal of the mowings or not, as is most desirable or necessary.