

This is because they are birds of the open; they fear not snow-covered fields nor wind-swept prairies. They are strictly ground-loving birds, being rarely seen perched on any elevated object. When disturbed they rise in a straggling manner, uttering short, whistled notes, and are as apt as not after a brief flight to return to or near the point of departure.

Horned larks have a useful relation to golf courses through their food habits. They are fond of weed seeds, making nearly two-thirds of their food of them, and consume large numbers of the seeds of such turf pests as crab grass, smartweeds, foxtail grass, chickweeds, dandelion, and others. Among insects and other crawling nuisances on golf courses that are eaten by horned larks are white grubs, wire-worms, dung beetles, clover leaf and clover root weevils, grasshoppers, leaf-hoppers, chinch bugs, ants, and earthworms.

Horned larks do no harm on golf courses and little anywhere else; they help to control both weed and insect pests of turf, and are attractive in appearance, action, and music. They are among the most interesting of our bird friends, and should be treated as such.

Chestnut Blight Spreading

Of interest to many southern golf courses is a recent statement of the Department of Agriculture to the effect that the chestnut blight is continuing its rapid spread in the southern states. The department, in a statement sent to the press, advises owners of chestnut timber to consider carefully the salvage feature involved, particularly in regard to the smaller trees suitable for poles or for the manufacture of tannic acid, as the chances appear to be that due to the spread of the blight these trees will not reach maturity. It is expected that within the next ten years the blight will have killed most of the chestnut timber in the southern Appalachian region. The spread of the blight covers the states of West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The Department of Agriculture now has a botanist searching the wilds of Formosa and Korea for new species of chestnut trees for introduction into the United States in the hope of obtaining a blight-resistant tree.

Compost Pits.—A well-screened, out-of-the-way spot in or adjacent to woods on any golf course is an ideal location for the construction of compost pits. Into this pit weeds, leaves, and rakings may be dumped, and the dampness which collects naturally in such low places will quickly aid in the decomposition of the material and in rendering it suitable for use as compost. Sand, clay, or loam can be advantageously added to the contents of the pit from time to time. The addition of lime hastens the decomposition and counteracts any excess of acidity that may develop in the decomposing process. The addition of nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia speeds up decomposition remarkably, and may be used to advantage if quick results are desired. It will also help to turn the contents over with forks occasionally. On most golf courses over the country oak leaves are available in great abundance. It is true these contain tannic acid, but it has been found that the tannic acid disappears in the process of decomposition.