

A Lesson in Distributing Fertilizers

Fairways marked with zebra-like stripes such as shown in the accompanying illustration of a fairway at Washington, D. C., are not uncommon. Such markings usually indicate that careless methods are used by the greenkeeping force in applying fertilizers. The fairway in the illustration is covered with a young turf of Kentucky bluegrass and redtop. As the turf was poor, even though the stand of plants was good, it was decided to apply sulphate of ammonia. The application was made in early April with a lime spreader. The fertilizer was mixed with sand to give sufficient bulk for even distribution through the spreader. However, the latter was clogged on one side when the application was begun, a fact which remained unnoticed during the entire operation over all the fairways. Carelessness in using a machine in this condition resulted in the application of the fertilizer from one side only. As the spreader was drawn



The wavy stripes with which this fairway is decorated were not in the golf architect's plans but are due to a partly clogged fertilizer distributor.

over the course, alternate strips of the turf received sulphate of ammonia at the rate of 200 pounds to the acre and the intervening strips received no fertilizer. Although this application was heavy, no burning resulted. A few days after the fertilizer was applied a spring rain washed it into the soil, and the grass responded with a vigorous growth in the fertilized strips but retained its starved appearance in the strips over which the clogged half of the spreader had passed. The illustration shows the appearance of the turf about two weeks after the fertilizer was applied.

If turf of uniform appearance is desired it is essential that any fertilizer must be distributed evenly. A good greenkeeper will inspect his equipment regularly to see that it is in proper working order. Occasionally a striped appearance of turf resulting from a clogged fertilizer distributor can not be avoided; but it is hard to find justification for continuing the use of such a machine over all the fairways of a golf course or even over a single fairway.

Another thing made clear by the illustration is the value of a good nitrogenous fertilizer on turf at a season of the year when a desirable turf grass such as Kentucky bluegrass can best utilize fertilizer.

In cutting fairways, cut them one time in one direction and the next time in the opposite direction. The results will be better.