



Equipment That Saves on Labor

Superintendent Tom Sams urges you to "Put your men on wheels."

by **TOM SAMS**

High among the requisites of today's modern golf course complexes is an up-to-date maintenance equipment inventory. Competing in the labor market against private enterprise has become one of the most critical problems for most turf managers. One way to alleviate this condition is by "putting your men on wheels."

The transition to mobility at Audubon Country Club, where I have been superintendent for the past 13 years, started in 1961. It was due to a labor problem and the realization that most men could perform their duties more efficiently by riding rather than walking.

My biggest problem was the selling job I had to do on my Green Committee. Thanks to a very open-minded and progressive group of men, I was able to get my ideas across. In every request made for labor saving equipment I explained what the primary function was and how we could benefit from the purchase of each item. This helped me a great

deal because, in looking back, I can't recall one request that I made that was refused.

In July, 1965, when I had a fairly large inventory of modern machinery, our maintenance building burned to the ground with a complete loss of equipment. After the first shock wore off, I realized that the fire could be a blessing in disguise. Here was a chance to hand-pick all of my equipment needs and erect a maintenance building that was more functional than we had in the past. The building came first. Thanks to Dave Dillon, a very generous member who is in the construction business, we built a concrete block, 8,000 square foot, two-story structure for \$25,000.

I exercised great care in purchasing my equipment, selecting what I thought would serve me best. These purchases included trucksters, small seven- and 10-H.P. tractors and trailers, triplex mowing units, power drag mat, power roller with sulky, electric carts, oversized spray rigs with booms, riding tee mowers with catchers and sulkies for anything we

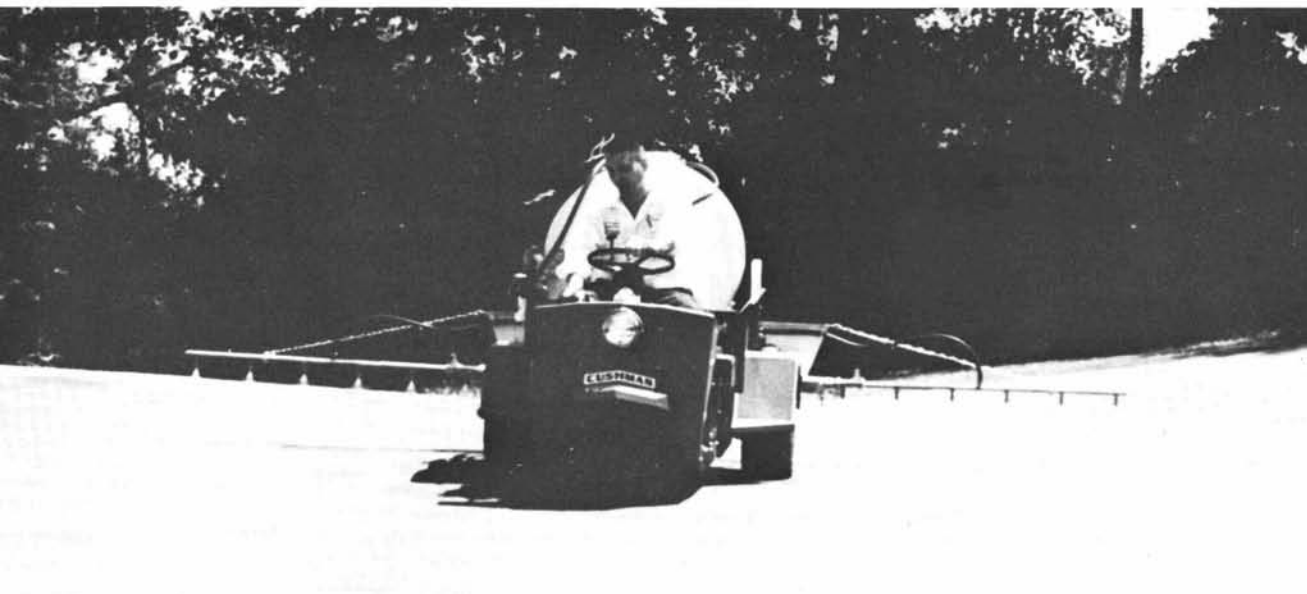
could attach them to. About the only thing that stayed the same were the putting green mowers. Now, thanks to a progressive turf equipment manufacturer, riding triplex greens mowers are available, and my order for one has been in for over three months.

All of my efforts to make the complete transition to mobility became more satisfying to me about two years ago. At that time our



A triplex putting green mower — forerunner of a new era.

An efficient and effective way to spray greens (and the wide tires do not harm the putting surface).



Board of Directors received a letter from one of our members who plays golf every day. His letter carried the complaint that he didn't see the workers out on the golf course very often. It just so happened that in that particular year, conditions were second to none at Audubon.

When confronted by my chairman with this complaint, I could have been sarcastic and answered that I was a magician; when I want fairways cut, I wave my arms and when I need rainfall I do a rain dance. Instead, I asked my chairman if he was satisfied with playing conditions as he found them. He answered, "They couldn't be better." Then I said, "Mr. Adams, this complaint is a tribute to me and my crew. You see, we are getting the job done and getting it done as inconspicuously as possible. Isn't that what it's all about; getting the job done but not letting them know how we do it?"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Sams has been the golf course superintendent at the Audubon Country Club, Louisville, Ky., for the past 13 years. He is currently President of the Midwest Turf Foundation, Purdue University, and editor of *Kentuckiana Klippings*, a publication of the Kentucky Golf Course Superintendents Association. He has also served as President and a Director of the KGCSA.