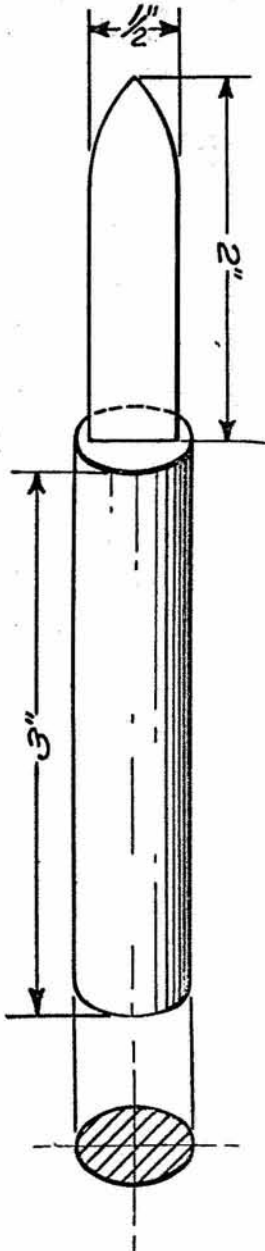


Ridding Putting Greens of Crab Grass

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In the article by Piper and Oakley on pages 88 to 92, along with references on pages 149, 165, 166, and 215, Volume I of THE BULLETIN, will be found about all that can be said today of the two weedy crab grasses, as well as of the various methods that have been employed for their eradication. Suffice it to say that I agree with them in their conclusions that picking by hand is the only safe and sure method of treatment known, and that if this is done properly the least injury will occur to the turf and putting surface. How to do this is the object of this article. By reference to the drawings on pages 89 and 91 it will be seen that crab grass is unlike a plantain and a dandelion, both of which have long tap-roots. Crab grass in contrast develops by branching from the base above the ground, making a more or less circular stool. If this stool is removed, the mass of small roots below will die and not reproduce. If the entire plants and roots are removed it will leave deep unsightly holes so often observed on some courses. The knife or tool in the accompanying illustration, which is shown full-size, is the most convenient instrument for this purpose. A large one-bladed pocket knife, a sharp fruit or paring knife, or an old breakfast knife ground to this shape and size and kept sharp on both sides, answers every purpose.



Early or hairy or common crab grass usually appears in Washington in May on bare ground, but in putting greens rarely before June. Late or smooth crab grass is much later. Between the two, putting greens require weeding from early June until September. Both are destroyed by the first frost in fall. The green should be watched for the first appearance of the weed, which is easily distinguished by its broad blade and light apple-green color, for at that time much of it can readily be removed by the fingers alone without the use of the knife. With us here at Washington, in a region which may be termed the hot-bed of crab grass, picking is a continuous job from the first appearance of the plant on the greens until September, at which time the greens are entirely free from it and have none of the picked-turkey-hen appearance seen when other methods are employed.

Now to the weeding methods. First of all, when the course is in play, cut temporary holes for the golfers' use, as men

can not work and keep out of danger at the same time. Cords should be stretched across the green at intervals of two and one-half to three feet apart so that each man can have plenty of elbow room and see what he is doing. Each man should be furnished with a small cushion, bag, or mat upon which to kneel so as not to disturb the turf or surface by undue pressure of his knees. I mention this because I have no use for a picker who sits down all day to pick weeds, as he must be free to use both hands at all times, as I shall explain later. If you have ever picked weeds day in and day out for a month or so you will appreciate that a man must at times change his position to get the kinks out of his legs and otherwise rest himself. But for the most part, kneeling is the most effective position.

When large or well-rooted plants are to be removed the knife described above should be inserted about one-half inch deep directly under the plant. If the knife is kept sharp this will sever the stronger roots, and with the other hand the plant is lifted with ease without disturbing the soil surface. In no case should the plant be lifted with the knife alone, as it will always remove the soil with it and leave an ugly hole, and will moreover leave the surface of the green bumpy. I do not know of any work on a golf course that requires more watching of the workmen than does this, or where more injury can be done by careless workers. Therefore if there should be one on the force who can not be trained to do his work right better dispense with his services. You may notice that I have always mentioned men in connection with this work. We are unable to get women here, and we find boys too trifling to do it right.

As the work progresses, a number of plants can be held in the hand and at the same time others lifted, when they are placed in small piles along the line and gathered up and destroyed later.

It is often desirable after picking a green to give it a light dressing and at the same time apply about 10 pounds of ammonium sulfate. Brush well, roll, and water before putting the green in play again. This should be done immediately after picking.

To some the process described above may seem very troublesome as well as expensive. To such I will say it is both. Situated as we are it is this or nothing. We prefer clean, playable greens, and our members demand it. In more favored locations the work is much less; but let me strongly advise against the common method so prevalent on many of our eastern courses of allowing the weed to remain until fall and then by raking and cutting hoping to eliminate the pest. By such treatment you are only adding fuel to the fire, as every strong plant will drop a thousand seeds or more to add to your troubles the following year.

Volume I of The Bulletin (1921) has been reprinted and may be obtained in one cover for \$2.25.

CONCAVE PLACES IN THE FAIRWAY.—Owing to the difficulty of cutting such places short, it is best to fill them up, lifting the turf first and relaying it after filling. Such basins or grooves with tall grass make the lie of the ball very unfair to the player.