

## GREENKEEPERS

# KNOW THEIR JOB

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*I'm compelled to address those who spend much time criticising the greenkeeper and the greens they are responsible for. In clubs there are always a few members who know more about greenkeeping than the greenkeeper. During my long experience as a bowler I have often heard on green and in the club house negative remarks by a member relating to the state of the greens and how they could improve the situation.*

I'm not having a crack at those members individually or personally. This is written to try and make playing members understand that a little knowledge on the subject of greenkeeping can be dangerous, and when several members in one club have a little knowledge on the art of greenkeeping it can become a serious matter and lead to serious consequences for all. The challenge for those critical of greenkeepers members is to be patient with your appointed Green Superintendent, Greenkeeper and the greens committee. Good greens are hard to come by and good greenkeepers are worth their weight in gold a real asset to your club.

I have seen disasters on bowling

green's caused through members persistently and indeed insisting on giving suspect advice to their greenkeepers. It is noticeable that this advice is usually given in an open forum for all present to hear rather than one on one with the greenkeeper. Often these members speak in all good faith for the love of their club and green but are they right? All clubs have their lines of communication with the Executive if these critical members chose to short circuit this accepted line of communication this in itself is not acceptable.

Nothing gives me, or any other bowler a greater thrill than to see a perfect bowling green and nothing is more upsetting to see a green with bare patches and uneven surfaces. Let us analyse the following, greenkeeping and green directing are dependent upon commonsense. Take a farmer, a builder, a captain of a cricket team and a great bowler, all of whom are famous for their ability and commonsense. Put them on a bowling green and say "take care of that!" Could you reasonably expect them to produce perfect greens? We would expect them to cut, water and possibly roll them without damage, but that's about all. A greenkeeper with experience should know a lot about soil, it's water holding

capacity, understand the use of fertilisers, when to apply and when not to apply, to be able to recognise disease and have full knowledge of fungicides, pesticides and herbicides, knowing all of these things and a multitude of others is very necessary to the maintenance of a bowling green. It is also worth remembering that a greenkeeper now has a legal obligation (HASNO and others) to obtain qualifications to be able to carry out spraying activities on your behalf. How is that members who know so little of these matters trip over themselves to give greenkeepers advice?

In light of all of the above comments I would suggest that critical members focus their concerns and energies on making sure that the club is providing above average facilities and equipment for your greenkeeper by way of the club budget, funding, and working conditions as well as responding to the call for volunteers at times when help is needed.

Please heed this message greenkeeping is a science, and a very difficult one so try and understand that your greenkeeper is trying to give you better greens on which to play, they worry ten times more than you do over the problems faced, with times when climatic conditions beat the best of brains.