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A golf course is a thing of beauty and requires daily care and maintenance to ensure it remains in the best possible playing condition for its many loyal members. When faced with ever changing and adverse weather conditions the task of maintenance, or greenkeeping, as it's referred to in the industry, can become a challenging but rewarding prospect.

Based on the size, standard and condition of a golf course the number of greenkeepers required to maintain the course could vary. Larger courses may have a head greenkeeper, supervisors and then a number of assistant greenkeepers and trainees. There a number of professional qualifications that can be completed if you wish to reach the top of a career as a greenkeeper and on the job training at your local golf course would certainly help things get underway.

Throughout the year mowing can dominate a greenkeepers daily task list especially in the spring and summer when the grass is growing at an accelerated rate. A crucial aspect of any golf course is to ensure the greens are kept in pristine condition. Therefore these would be cut everyday, usually to a height of between 3mm and 5mm. A ride on triple cylinder mower with grass collecting boxes would be used for this. It is also common to mow greens with a hand pushed cylinder mower; especially on newly seeded greens or when the wet weather does not permit the use of a ride on mower.

Other important areas contributing to a golf courses appearance are the tee boxes, green surrounds and fairways. Again, these would usually be mowed by using a ride on cylinder mower. On a fairway it is not uncommon to see this job completed using a 5 gang mower to help cover the ground more quickly. The fairway area of a golf course is a vast area and it is no small task to keep it in a playable condition which would usually be between 12mm and 18mm. These areas would be mown approximately 3 times per week.

The rough, which golfers want to avoid, would be mown on average once per week. This is left longer than the fairway and can sometimes be mown into first and second cuts set at increasing heights. A rotary mower would be used for this job.

With the mowing under control there are a few more regular golf course jobs. Changing the holes, or pin positions, would usually be completed twice a week. This ensures that a particular area of the green doesn't become worn or compacted. It also provides new challenges for regular golfers. Each green will also have some positions which are harder to approach and these would often be reserved for competition play.

Bunker raking and edging is also a requirement. It is good etiquette for golfers to rake bunkers, or sand traps, after their use although this doesn't always happen. A three wheeled ride on machine called a bunker rake would be used to rake the entire bunker. This has three teathed blades on the rear which rake the bunker, covering large areas quickly. Hand tools would be used once a month to edge the bunker of any over grown grass. Further monthly jobs would include flymo-ing water hazard banks.

This short article has covered some aspects of golf course greenkeeping and the tasks and jobs discussed are performed on a week to week basis. There are however a number of other maintenance jobs that are performed throughout the year. These can be completed by the greenkeepers if the golf club has suitable machinery or by a sports ground contractor. The type of maintenance would include deep tine aeration, hollow tining, earthquaking, top dressing and

overseeding.

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