

The Maples seeder



Photo courtesy of Palmer Maples Jr.

Frank Maples, the superintendent at Pinehurst (N.C.) GC for more than 20 years, was innovative in his approach to golf course management.

In his day, Frank Maples (1886-1949) was regarded as one of the foremost experts in golf course maintenance in the southern United States. He was an employee of Pinehurst (N.C.) National Golf Club for 41 years, beginning with its construction in the early 1900s. When he died, he had been Pinehurst's superintendent for more than 20 years, and when illness forced Maples to retire, his son Henson took over his duties as superintendent.

In the summer of 1946, Maples ran into a problem. Labor was hard to find, and it took a large crew to over-

seed the fairways the way he wanted. Determined to find a better, faster and more reasonable way to overseed his fairways with less manpower, Maples went to the drawing board.

His basic tool was a lime spreader. The spreader was designed to pour the lime from a hopper onto a rotating fan-like blade, which distributed the lime over a 15-foot area. Maples fixed two such lime spreaders at opposite ends of a 15-foot board and attached the board to a tractor. Iron rods were attached to the levers and extended to the operator of the seeder, allowing one crew member to control the hoppers.

To ensure the entire fairway was covered, a marker made from the tooth of a hay rake was attached near the outside wheel of the seeder. It marked the route covered by the spreaders, enabling the driver to cover all the fairways with an equal distribution of seed. The hoppers were replenished from bags of seed loaded on a nearby truck.

With Maples' invention, only two crew members were needed to do a job that had previously required the labor of 15. One crew member drove the tractor while the other regulated the distribution of seed.

The new Maples Seeder solved the superintendent's problem — not only did it require less manpower, it also did the job in half the time. **GCM**

— Susanne Clement
senior librarian/curator

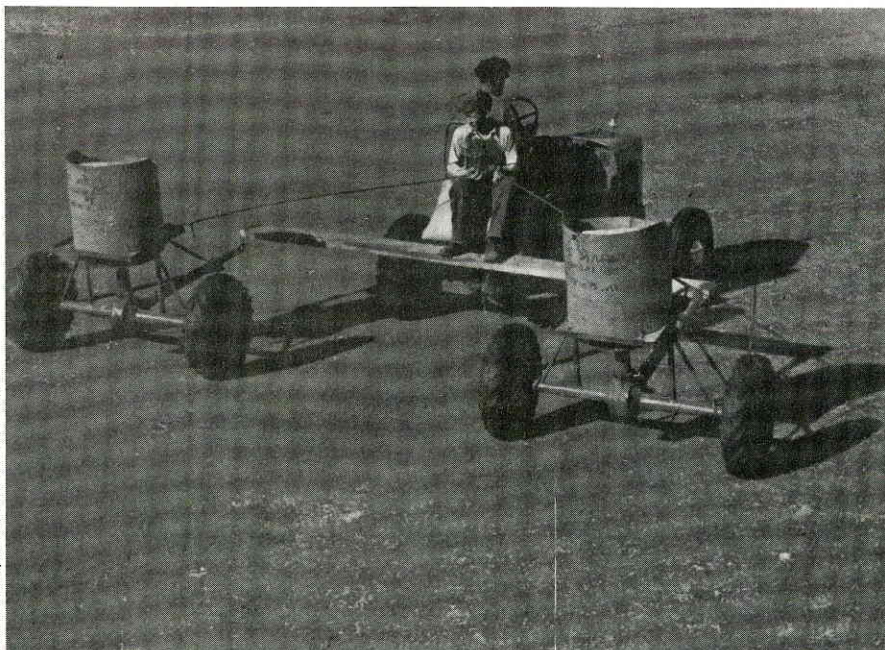


Photo courtesy of GCSAA Historical Collection

Maples' device improved the efficiency of overseeding operations at Pinehurst (N.C.) National GC.

Information in this article was taken from the special collections in GCSAA's Historical Preservation Program.