

The USGA Green Section Record



August 6, 2010

Survey on Green Conditions and Practices at Your Course

by the [Green Section Staff](#)

This survey is for everyone so please take a moment to answer four brief questions. Our goal is to get a view of how greens are faring across the country and how often a couple of key maintenance practices are being employed. Please base your answers on the course you play most often or the course at which you are employed. Although you can see some of the results right away, a more detailed analysis will be included in next week's **Green Section Record**.



Thanks for your help!

[**Survey on Green Conditions and Practices at Your Course**](#)

[**View the results without taking the survey**](#)

Timely Green Section Record Articles To Help Your Course Through This Difficult Summer

by the [Green Section Staff](#)



From winter to summer it has been a tough year for all types of greens.

This has been and continues to be one of the most difficult years in quite some time for golf courses across the country. It all started with much of the "bermudagrass belt" suffering winter injury from record low temperatures. Nearly nationwide, this has been followed by a combination of oppressive heat and humidity resulting in a struggle for survival of bentgrass and *Poa annua* greens

Recent issues of the **Record** have included numerous articles from the Green Section staff suggesting steps to reduce and recover from injury. Below are convenient links to additional articles to help courses all across the country make the most of this challenging year.

Putting Green Nurseries and Sodding Techniques

Unfortunately, many courses lost enough grass this year that large-scale reestablishment through sodding is in order. The following articles emphasize how

critical it is that every course maintain a top-quality putting green nursery and techniques for successful sod installation and establishment.

[Green side up!: Sodding putting greens can be a viable method of establishment with proper care, good product, and reasonable expectations](#)

[Nursery rhymes: Damage to greens can be quickly repaired with putting green nursery sod](#)

[Poa/bent nurseries- a perfect match](#)

[Sew it seams: Old parts can become useful tools for sodding putting greens](#)

[All things considered: For heaven's sake, get some insurance](#)

How Do We Keep This From Happening Again?

Have you ever noticed that when environmental stresses are severe some golf course greens are hammered while others show little, if any, damage? This is because overall green performance is the result of a combination of factors including light, air movement, traffic, available hole locations, drainage and so on. There is no better time to closely evaluate each greensite than when the greens are under stress. A little detective work now can pinpoint steps that need to be taken to prevent damage in the future.

[Helping your greens make the grade: Here's a guide to help you evaluate the many factors that determine how your greens perform](#)

Managing Stressed Turf and Disease

Few aspects of turfgrass management are more challenging than the identification, prevention, and control of turfgrass diseases. This challenge is greatly magnified during extreme weather conditions when the combination of weakened turf and extremely high disease pressure can make complete control impossible.

[How to take a turfgrass disease sample](#)

[Managing Greens Under Stress](#)

[Survival 101: Dealing with ever-increasing expectations](#)

[Old problems, new challenges: Nuisance problems have emerged as major management issues on golf courses](#)

[Evaluation of cytokinin plant extract biostimulants, iron, and nitrogen products for their effects on creeping bentgrass summer quality](#)

[The costs of blowing wind: A guide to the selection, installation, and operation of fans for better summer performance of bentgrass putting greens](#)

[Burning the candle at both ends: High temperatures and low cutting heights lead to a dead end!](#)

A Record Breaking Summer

by **[R.A. \(Bob\) Brame](#)**, director, North-Central Region

Many areas of the country are on a record-setting pace for summer weather conditions, and, for many, golf course conditioning is well below golfers' expectations. Let's consider what's affecting these conditions.



First and foremost, cool-season grasses (e.g. *Poa annua*, bentgrass, perennial ryegrass, bluegrass and fescues) are so labeled for good reason - they don't perform well in heat! Warm-season grasses (like bermudagrass and zoysiagrass), on the other hand, thrive in the heat. Clearly, the concern has been, and continues to be, the weak performance of cool-season grasses. High soil temperatures make it difficult for plants to survive, even when few other stresses are added. In the case of this summer, the combination of high temperatures and wet conditions from frequent rainfall has caused physiological decline and death of turf on golf courses throughout the region and country.

The majority of samples submitted to diagnostic laboratories show no causal pathogen, which points to physiological and/or mechanical causes. Nevertheless, there are a number of diseases adding to turf decline, and the most concerning is bacterial wilt, which has been confirmed on some of the newer bentgrass varieties (<http://apsjournals.apsnet.org/doi/abs/10.1094/PDIS-94-7-0922B>). Gray leaf spot (<http://www.agry.purdue.edu/turf/tips/2010/07262010GLS.html>), brown patch, *Pythium*, dollar spot and anthracnose also are part of the mix. **[Read on suggestions to deal with these problems.](#)**

Lose a Battle to Win the War

by **[Bud White](#)** and **[Ty McClellan](#)**, agronomists, Mid-Continent Region

In this case, the 'battle' is playability, i.e. putting green smoothness and speed, and the 'war' is turfgrass survival. With this summer's weather challenges, some courses have already lost major portions of rough and fairways to natural physiological decline or flooding. Reports of greens being lost are on the rise, and these facilities are now faced with re-grassing this fall. For others, the fight continues.

Root depth on many greens is generally two inches or less, and heat indexes in recent weeks have exceeded 115°F, with average daily relative humidities just shy of 100%. Soil temperatures are frequently in the mid-90s and above. (Note: Bentgrass root dieback begins when soil temperatures reach about 86°F.) Most of the weaker species that possess lower thresholds to environmental extremes, such as *Poa annua*, have long disappeared from greens and surrounds. Arguably the most difficult to manage area of the golf course, even during favorable conditions, putting green collars have been decimated regardless of species. For many, the only objective now is to preserve what bentgrass remains on the greens and what Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and tall fescue continues to hang on in the surrounds.

Given the harshness of weather extremes across several geographic regions this summer, additional resources can be found **[in the remainder of this update.](#)**

Precision Irrigation - The Key To Firm And Fast Playing Conditions

by **[Larry Gilhuly](#)** and **[Derf Soller](#)**, agronomists, Northwest Region

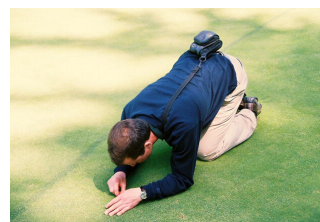
There is no question that the duel at Sahalee Country Club for the U.S. Senior Open was a great golf competition, but the story behind the scenes is how Superintendent Rich Taylor and his staff took a golf course to near-perfect firm and fast playing conditions for seven straight days. Competitors were treated to a consistent playing surface, with green speeds each day in the 12'6"-12'8" range. The heavily tree-lined fairways offered the maximum challenge, requiring extremely straight tee shots and irons. How did they do it? [**Read on to find out how.**](#)

Weekly Update Archive

Looking for a previous issue of the Weekly Update?

Would you like to see the Weekly Update issues you missed? Or, maybe you heard about an article or video in a previous update. All of the issues are stored in one convenient location - the Green Section Weekly Update Archive.

[**Visit the archive**](#)



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A Valuable Resource For All, And It's Free

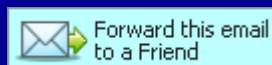
Be sure to take a minute to visit the Green Section's portal at <http://gsportal.usga.org>. There you will find information regarding upcoming live webcasts and links to recordings of more than 30 previously delivered webcasts, as well as announcements regarding upcoming USGA Green Section activities, education conferences, and meetings.

[**Visit the USGA Green Section Portal**](#)

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