

The USGA Green Section Record



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In-House Versus Contract Renovations

Can our crew do that?

by [Bud White](#), director, Mid-Continent Region

The decision to attempt an in-house renovation as opposed to an outside contractor has always been a controversial issue for golf courses. A superintendent is often seen as a Jack-of-All-Trades, and if a golf course crew has a backhoe and a dump trailer, then many golfers automatically assume they are equipped to rebuild the greens, install a new irrigation system, renovate the bunkers . . . or maybe even build a new parking lot.

There are particular parameters a club must weigh to decide whether a renovation project can be done in-house by the superintendent and crew, or if it should be



Winter drainage projects are one of the most common in-house projects completed by the maintenance staff.

outsourced to a contractor to get the job done properly and efficiently. Far too many boards or green committees simply assume that any construction project can be accomplished by the maintenance staff. True, many projects can effectively be done in-house, usually with a small amount of rental equipment and some extra labor. But these projects depend largely on the experience of the superintendent, crew and the size of the project. Common in-house projects include drainage work, bunker renovation, and sometimes tee leveling. There are circumstances, however, when even these cannot be done in-house due to the project's magnitude, the

expertise of the maintenance staff with equipment operation, crew size and staffing, and the availability of the proper equipment. Management must be realistic with what a maintenance crew can accomplish. Saving money is not the only goal. [Read this article for specific examples of projects golf courses can accomplish in-house.](#)

USGA-Sponsored Research You Can Use

Researching Perennial Ryegrass Winter Survival

by Dr. Michelle DaCosta and Dr. Eric Watkins

Perennial ryegrass possesses several traits that make it an excellent option for golf course use. Rapid

establishment and excellent wear tolerance are primary reasons this grass has been widely planted. Unfortunately, perennial ryegrass has difficulty surviving harsh winters in northern locations. To date there has not been significant progress in the development of perennial ryegrass cultivars with improved winter hardiness.

In the last several years, turfgrass researchers from the University of Minnesota have started to investigate perennial ryegrass plants collected from around the United States, Asia, and Europe. Results from winter field trials and growth chamber studies identified perennial ryegrass breeding lines with superior freezing tolerance compared to many commercially available cultivars, suggesting that significant progress could be made in the development of cultivars better adapted to northern climatic regions.



Perennial ryegrass fairways are common in northern locations where winter injury potential is high. Through future breeding efforts, improved understanding of perennial ryegrass winter survival mechanisms will be valuable in preventing devastating winter injury.

Dr. Michelle DaCosta is an assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and Dr. Eric Watkins is an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota

[More about this project including a summary of the results.](#)

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Shake 'N Rake



A Northwest Regional Update

by [Larry Gilhuly](#), director

Golf course maintenance is a never-ending task, with daily, weekly, monthly and annual programs needed to create desired playing conditions. However, can you name a routine task that is never ending, does damage to mowers, makes mechanics unhappy, and can greatly impact playing conditions in several ways? How about removing stones/rocks from bunkers?

Time consuming is only half of this issue, but the only time that removal is effective is when the sand is dry. What about the majority of the time when the sand is too moist and does not allow for effective cleaning?

The problem with wet sand is that the bridging among sand particles is stronger than the particles simply falling to the ground through a screen. In every type of manual or machine-powered unit, vibrating the sand does little to actually move the sand downward. What is needed is an up-and-down shaking motion to be more effective. Although humans can shake a rake or a small screen approximately three times per second, this is not enough to move wet sand through a screen. However, when this rate is increased to 30 times per second, the task of moving sand through a 1/4" screen when it is wet can be accomplished. This was viewed at Chambers Bay, site of the 2015 US Open, where this former gravel/sand pit has the tremendous rock issue.

[Read the rest of this update.](#)

Now What? Take One Step Forward At A Time



A Mid-Atlantic Regional Update

by [Keith Happ](#), senior agronomist

During the recent Penn State Turf Conference, many superintendents were discussing their fall activities in preparation for winter and snow mold control. Other issues, such as putting green topdressing, late season aeration, drainage, tree maintenance and equipment maintenance were discussed in detail. However, one of the biggest concerns focused on dealing with another summer like 2010.

There are still many agronomic programs that need to be completed before winter is here, and it is never too early to communicate with golfers and committees about course setup for the New Year. Defining the course setup allows for a more accurate determination of the necessary programs to achieve course playability criteria. The Green and/or Golf Committees define the course setup, and the maintenance staff are charged with meeting golfer expectations. Without a defined setup document, it is very difficult to meet expectations. In effect, it is like trying to hit a moving target. Now is the time to come together, put on a pot of coffee, and decide how the course should play and, ultimately, be maintained. Only then can an accurate and realistic budget be outlined. [Read the rest of this update.](#)

Need A Good Laugh - Read This!

What do you get when a newspaper reporter crosses bluegrass, buffalo, and bermuda - bint grass of course!

by the USGA Staff

We often encourage our readers to visit the *Green Section Record* archives to read some of the history of the game and industry. You never know what you will come across. The following article ran in the September 17, 1924 issue of the *Green Section Bulletin* (the predecessor of the *Record*). It is included here exactly as it was printed then including spelling, punctuation, and content.

A Reporter's Weird Tale of Creeping Bent

The following item from a western newspaper is a beautiful example either of the difficulty of getting information straight or else of the reporter's tendency to exaggerate. The article is really funny besides being remarkable in that nearly every statement is erroneous. Evidently the reporter imagined we belonged to that group of freaks termed "plant wizards."

"A new variety of lawn grass which is said to combine the beauty of blue grass with the hardiness of Bermuda or buffalo grass is being given a thorough test by Mr. A ____ at his home, on ____ street. The new plant, which is cross between blue grass, buffalo, and Bermuda, is called creeping bint (the word bent is spelled "bint" throughout the article), and is being distributed to a few persons throughout the country, by the United States Department of Agriculture.

"Mr. A ____ is one of the two men in Kansas to get samples of the grass from the department, and it was by an odd stroke of good fortune that he happened to be one of the

two. Some three years ago, seeing in an agricultural journal an account of the government's project of crossing the three grasses, he wrote to Washington, asking for some of the roots. "I went out and dug up my parking and got ready to plant the stuff," said Mr. A_____.

"Three years later, or early this spring, he received the coveted roots, together with instructions as to how to plant the grass. Creeping bint was not ready to distribute when Mr. A_____ first wrote to the government, and even now the government does not have any more of the roots ready to give out.

"When the cross was made between the three grasses, it destroyed the seed producing ability of the plant, and so the roots are the only means of propagation. In five years' time, however, the grass will start producing seed again. It takes that long for regeneration.

"Mr. A_____ is very enthusiastic about the new sort of grass. It grows much more thickly on the ground than does blue grass, and yet has the same deep, rich color. So thick does creeping bint cover the ground that it absolutely chokes out all other forms of vegetation.

"But one of its best qualities is its ability to withstand both the shade and the sun and to grow profusely even in a semi-arid climate. The cross with buffalo grass, the native vegetation of this part of the country, gives it this last mentioned quality.

"An odd quality of the grass is that it is elastic. A strand of the plant stretches much like a rubber band, showing its tough fiber.

"Creeping bint remains green until Christmas time and freshens up again early in the spring, thus, retaining the good qualities of blue grass.

"Mr. A_____ intends eventually to plant his entire yard in creeping bint. He plants it in rows and it spreads over the entire plot quite rapidly, each joint forming a root and growing into the ground. After Mr. A_____ gets his own plot well started, he intends to sell the roots to others who wish them. He has already had considerable demand for samples. Anyone who wishes to see the new grass can do so by going to Mr. A_____ 's house. The parking already bears a thick mat of grass, although it has been only a couple of months since the roots were set out.

"It is believed that creeping bint will prove a wonderful boon to towns in semi-arid climates-towns which wish to have pretty lawns in spite of the hot sun and dry weather."

You can find your own historical "gems" of agronomic wisdom by browsing the archives of the *Record*. [Just click here.](#)

Green Section Record Archive (digital)

Looking for a previous issue of the *Green Section Record*?

The **Green Section Record** has been published under various names since 1921 and is composed of an amazing collection of full-text articles and photos. This collection is stored and maintained by the wonderful library staff at Michigan State University in the **Turfgrass Information File (TGIF)**. All past issues of the **Record**, right up to and including this one, can be accessed free of charge by following this link.

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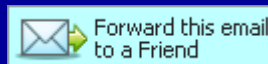
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