

The USGA Green Section Record



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Feeling the Heat - Course Conditions Suffering in the Midwest

by [Ty McClellan](#), agronomist, Mid-Continent Region

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Summer arrived early and with a bang. Given the number of complaints from golfers about course conditions in recent weeks, it is obvious that everyone had become complacent following the mild summers of 2008 and 2009, when little turf stress was observed.

The combined number of 90-degree days over the last two years was much less than the annual average in just one season. Cooler temperatures, overcast skies, and frequent rainfall in 2008 and 2009 provided environmental conditions similar to that of the Pacific Northwest, where ***Poa annua*** thrives. With plenty of moisture and the absence of intense heat, ***Poa annua*** populations increased on many courses. Unfortunately, ***Poa annua*** declines much faster than bentgrass during weather extremes, which is why it fell prey to winterkill damage this winter and why it appears to be fading during this summer's heat. **[Read on to learn how superintendents are managing stressed turf](#)**

The Other Shoe Has Dropped - and Courses Are Feeling the Pain

by [Darin S. Bevard](#), senior agronomist, Mid-Atlantic Region

A large portion of the Mid-Atlantic Region has experienced a long spell of dry, hot weather - burned-out rough, drought-stressed fairways, water supplies running on empty and temperatures hovering near 100 degrees. While some areas received timely rains, many remain dry. Luckily, limited rainfall occurred with the high temperatures, which made the high temperature conditions tolerable until the other shoe dropped.

Torrential rains have occurred in many areas, especially the eastern half of the region. While cool season grasses tolerate hot weather very well, the combination of high temperatures and high humidity had predictable results - turfgrass stress and decline occurring on putting greens in these rain-soaked areas. ***Poa annua*** is the

most affected to date. [**Read Darin's recommendations to reduce the extent of damage to your greens.**](#)



High heat combined with the high humidity that accompanies prolonged rainy periods results in greatly increased disease pressure on already weakened greens.

Summer Survival Mode - Record Conditions are Taking a Toll

by [**Jim Skorulski**](#) , senior agronomist, Northeast Region

The extreme weather is impacting golf courses around the region with conditions not seen since 1988. Some parts of the region have the added challenge of drought conditions that are straining water supplies and raising concerns over water use restrictions. With soil temperatures consistently in the 85-88 degree range, significant stress on root systems abounds.

The higher-than-normal stress has ramped up disease pressure, especially dollar spot, brown patch and summer patch activity. Parasitic nematode populations also are impacting a number of golf courses. There is a potential new bacterial threat to creeping and velvet bentgrass reported by Dr. Mitkowski at the University of Rhode Island. The bacteria, ***Acidovorax avenae***, is active during hot weather causing plants to bleach out (etiolate) and wilt. The bacteria has been isolated from infected plants collected from several New England golf courses.

[Jim offers a number of excellent steps to help courses everywhere get through these tough weather periods - Read on](#)

Irrigation Management and Water Conservation Efforts in California - Good Ideas That Work Everywhere

by [**Pat Gross**](#) , director, Southwest Region

Many golf courses throughout California suffered the effects of mandatory water cutbacks in 2009, and the same is true in 2010. As of June 1st, customers of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power are subject to Phase III water restrictions requiring a mandatory 15% reduction in water use as well as restrictions on days and times that water can be applied. Variances to the ordinance were granted to golf courses if they agreed to an additional 5% reduction. Some of the actions taken by golf courses as a result of the water restrictions included: **[Check out what California superintendents are doing](#)**



Eliminating irrigation of tee banks can save large amounts of water

A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned

How an energy audit may save you big bucks in the years to come

by [Chris Hartwiger](#), senior agronomist, Southeast Region



Although modern clubhouses have been constructed with energy efficiency in mind, there are still opportunities to reduce energy costs in these buildings.

The name of the game for golf courses in these recessionary times is to keep the current standards and find ways to do so by spending less money. Although turfgrass managers have expertise in many areas, it is unlikely that their turfgrass management degrees provided them with training in how to reduce the consumption of energy at their golf facilities. Actually, this is good news, as it opens the door to a large, unexplored territory for reduced costs and the potential savings that can come from this exploration.

Managing energy costs is a complex subject, but getting started is easy. The remainder of this article will demonstrate why an energy audit is worthwhile and how someone can

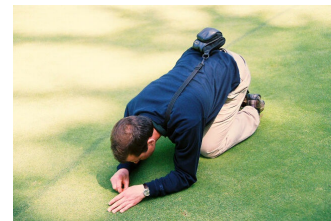
begin the process. Potential items to evaluate will be reviewed. Most important of all, this article will serve to help you begin the process. **[Read on to see how your course can save energy and money.](#)**

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