

The USGA Green Section Record



July 30, 2010

Putting Greens Are Struggling To Survive Across Much of the Country

Bentgrass and *Poa annua* greens are hard-hit

From the Southeast

by [Chris Hartwiger](#), senior agronomist

Important note to golfers: Sometimes conditions can become so oppressive on a given site that it overwhelms creeping bentgrass and causes rapid decline, despite the heroic efforts of the superintendent and staff. This information is designed to focus on what can be done amidst this difficult summer.

Judging from the number of calls to our office, this has been the most difficult summer for bentgrass putting greens in the past decade. Summer heat was intense throughout June, with the average temperatures in most cities six to seven degrees greater than normal. July started gently, but upper 90's or low 100's soon followed, accompanied by sporadic and locally frequent, heavy afternoon thunderstorms. Some cities are closing in on a record for the most days above 90 degrees, and reports of declining bentgrass putting greens and collars are widespread. What will August weather bring?

This article and the video below provides seven important steps to help greens through the remainder of the summer with as little damage as possible.

[**Read Chris' entire article which includes important links to applicable turf research.**](#)

[**Watch a short video of seven suggestions to help get your greens through the summer.**](#)

From the Mid-Atlantic

by [Stanley J. Zontek](#), director

The summer of 2010 is on a pace to break all temperature records in most of the Mid-Atlantic region. As of today, the month of June was the warmest in history for Philadelphia. The Washington, D.C. area has had forty days of 90+ degree temperatures and we are still in July.

The agronomists of the Mid-Atlantic Region believe it is necessary and appropriate to send special letters to USGA member courses on "defensive maintenance and management programs" as long as these weather extremes continue. Obviously, extra care must be taken to pamper the grass through this difficult weather. Equally, extra understanding from golfers can help achieve that goal. It is a common problem for everyone. If we all work together and do what is best for the grass, the summer of 2010 will one day be nothing more than just a bad memory.

This letter also will be sent to golf associations and regional golf course superintendent organizations. In this way, information can be made available to all golf courses, whether or not they are USGA members (and we hope most are). [Read on to see the entire letter.](#)

From the Northeast

by [Adam Moeller](#), agronomist

Annual bluegrass turf, particularly on putting greens, is hanging on for dear life at courses across the Northeast Region, and at many courses it has given up or is in the process of giving up. Anthracnose, summer patch, annual bluegrass weevils, parasitic nematodes, heat and/or drought stress, wet wilt, scald, etc. are all responsible, and no doubt the year of 2010 will be burned in the memories of many turf managers for a long time to come. June and July could be the hottest on record in some locations, and when high temperatures are combined with humid conditions and sporadic thunderstorms, turf decline can be difficult or impossible to control.

Annual bluegrass turf, which has very poor stress tolerance compared to creeping bentgrass, is caving in first, but even bentgrass is failing in some situations. It feels as though the equator shifted north by a couple hundred miles this year, and our grasses are simply not equipped to deal with the added stress the weather is producing. [Read on to see Adam's entire article.](#)

A Labor of Love or a Love of Labor?

A detailed labor analysis is effective for tracking costs and making decisions.

by [Patrick J. Gross](#), director, Southwest Region

To the uninitiated, golf course maintenance seems simple. You mow the lawn on Monday and then have plenty of time to do other things throughout the week. It almost doesn't seem like a full-time job. Golfers, owners, and course officials often have a difficult time understanding how it can take so many people to perform a relatively simple task. So, how many people does it really take to maintain a golf course? Here is the definitive answer: It depends.



The time necessary to perform each basic maintenance task, such as raking and trimming bunkers, should be recorded and detailed as part of the labor analysis.

There are many differences among golf courses that make it difficult to apply a simple formula to all circumstances. First, no two golf courses are alike with regard to total acreage, terrain, design, number of bunkers, lakes, landscape area, trees, soil, water, and other factors. Labor requirements are different among courses because of these various factors. Second, golfers, owners, and club members have differing expectations for course conditioning. Some are willing to pay more for higher maintenance standards, while others cannot justify additional labor expense because of modest green fees or membership dues. Third, emergencies and unforeseen repairs are difficult to anticipate, yet must be absorbed into the daily maintenance routine. Accurately forecasting such emergencies is difficult, if not impossible. [Read on for a step-by-step procedure showing how to perform a labor analysis at your course.](#)

Ever Been Hit By A Golf Ball? Hurts Doesn't It!

USGA Green Section Staff

Few things anger golf course superintendents more than golfers hitting into the maintenance staff while they are trying to complete a job. This is because most superintendents have been hit themselves and know that it is a painful and potentially very dangerous experience. **[Please view the following video and forward it on to others.](#)**



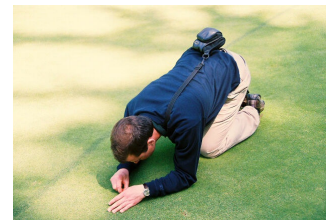
Note to all maintenance personnel: We know that when you view the video you are going to question the wheels on the walk-behind greensmowers. We failed to catch this "goof" when the animation was created but felt the message to be so important we decided to use the clip anyway.

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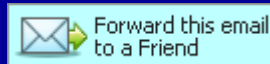
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