

Weekly Update



June 25, 2010

Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

The greens at Pebble Beach provided exceptional championship conditions.

by Patrick Gross, director, Southwest Region

Some television and on-site viewers who observed the greens at Pebble Beach at the 110th U.S. Open Championship may have asked why they did not look like the emerald green putting surfaces everyone has come to know at Pebble Beach. TV viewers saw mottled, spotty, discolored greens that would be alarming and perhaps unacceptable to many superintendents and golfers. The *Poa annua* greens at Pebble Beach are a combination of two construction methods - five different-aged USGA greens and 13 native soil greens - growing in multiple microclimates that require different management strategies. No easy task for Superintendent Chris Dalhamer and the maintenance staff.



Most Poa annua greens are composed of many different, but closely related, types of Poa annua plants.

[To find out why, read the rest of this article](#)



Firm and Fast, At Last!

*by **[Brian Whitlark](#)** and **[Derf Soller](#)***

The golf industry has faced substantial economic challenges over the past year. Many golf course owners and operators find themselves deep in the rough and struggling to stay in the game. In states such as California, Arizona, and Florida, about 5 percent of golf courses have exhibited overt signs of financial trouble, and the number of "at risk" courses is closer to 15 percent. Revenues have declined due to lower membership and green fees at most golf facilities.

Right now may be the best time ever for golf courses to take a good look in the mirror and review how their maintenance philosophy impacts the bottom line. There may never be a better opportunity to move forward and gather momentum toward a

more sustainable approach to managing golf course operations. In fact, it is foreseeable that the golf industry in North America will see a paradigm shift toward focusing on golf course playability rather than lush conditions and overindulgent cosmetics.

[Can this work at your course? Read more.](#)



Turf Twister

Saline Water, Leaching, and Water Savings

Nevada



Q: I irrigate with a saline water source and have been on a regular leaching program to remove salts from my greens, but my water costs are going up significantly this year. How do I manage the salts and save water at the same time? (Nevada)

A: New technology has become available for golf course superintendents to remotely monitor soil salts, moisture, and temperature through sensors that can be installed throughout the golf course. The sensors provide data on a continual basis and can actually email a superintendent. The advantage is that sensors monitor salinity and moisture as it accumulates in the soil, as well as the ability to quantify the reduction in salinity following leaching events. Some courses have gone from semi-monthly leaching events to as few as four to six per year following the installation of such devices, saving a substantial amount of water. The technology provides the superintendent with the necessary information for maintaining good turf quality.

Taking The "Ick" Out Of Excess Organic Material

by Larry Gilhuly, director, Northwest Region

From the start of the year, the west side of the Cascade Range has set a record (Seattle area) for the most continuous days with a high temperature below 75 degrees. When this type of cool weather occurs, excessive rainfall usually follows from the Pacific, and 2010 has not disappointed those who like rain. Although cool season grasses (e.g. *Poa annua*, perennial ryegrass, bentgrass) truly appreciate this type of weather pattern, the conditions create potential for excessive organic buildup that causes surface firmness. In some cases, it is the soil underneath, but in many cases near putting greens, it is excessive organic material that does not let water infiltrate into the soil. The result is wet, unmowable areas marked by white paint. Can this condition be easily fixed at no cost or should all of these locations have complete renovation? [Read on](#) as one golf course superintendent found a low-cost, workable answer.



Removing plugs and backfilling with sand to improve drainage.

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by the USGA Green Section Staff

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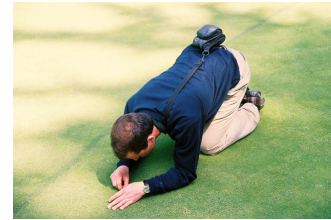


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