

# The USGA Green Section Record



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## A Time To Change

### **The ultradwarf bermudagrass putting green model is solid in the southern USA.**

by [Patrick O'Brien](#) and [Chris Hartwiger](#), agronomists, Southeast Region

There is a new business model in the Southeast Region that is improving the golf experience and reducing costs. The new model involves the replacement of creeping bentgrass putting greens with an ultradwarf bermudagrass variety. This concept has been a topic of conversation on many USGA Green Section Turf Advisory Service visits over the last five years. This article will convey what is happening, why it is happening, and how other courses have used this model to their advantage. The article stops short of providing the information to determine whether your golf course may benefit from this new business model. This information is best determined with an on-site visit and analysis of your situation.

#### **A New World Order**

A perfect storm of events has come together to accelerate the process of changing from creeping bentgrass to an ultradwarf bermudagrass.

These factors include:

- Oversupply of golf courses
- Difficult economy
- Player expectations
- Conversion method

[Read this entire article.](#)



***Ultradwarf establishment occurs with sprigs and most often using the no-till planting method. This economical planting method has provided excellent success over the past 15 years.***

## Winter Injury Alert!



### **A Northeast Regional Update**

by [David A. Oatis](#), director



**(L) Once the turf was exposed to air, the foul odor of decomposition could be detected. As the ice melted, the water turned green, indicating cellular damage. (R) Ice can be chipped away in a variety of ways. Turf plugs can then be removed with a hole saw or Sawsall.**

In recent weeks, Green Section agronomists have been speaking with superintendents across the Northeast Region with respect to winter injury and various strategies associated with possible removal of snow and ice layers from putting green turf. Although we currently are still several weeks away from understanding the extent of injury, damage has been documented at a few courses. As the snow and ice recedes or is removed, more damage likely will come to light.

At least at a couple of golf courses, it appears that significant injury occurred in late December and early January and likely can be attributed to crown hydration injury. A thick layer of ice has covered many putting greens since then, and some superintendents who have cut through the ice are discovering signs of anoxia. Toxic gases build up slowly under ice layers after prolonged cover, and even courses with ice layers intact for 35-40 days have discovered the tell-tale foul smells. On at least one course, the water from the melting ice

quickly turned green, a sure sign that plant cells have been ruptured and the chlorophyll is leaking out.

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

## Atlanta Golf Course Superintendent Inducted Into Georgia Golf Hall Of Fame



### A Southeast Regional Update

by [Patrick O'Brien](#) and [Chris Hartwiger](#), agronomists

Congratulations to Mark Esoda, golf course superintendent at the Atlanta Country Club, Marietta, GA for his induction into the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame. The award was presented during the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame banquet held at the Atlanta Athletic Club on January 22, 2011. As only the second superintendent honored in the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame, it makes a statement for the appreciation of agronomists who make golf courses playable and eco-friendly.

The award acknowledged the distinguished career of Mr. Esoda, who has been the superintendent at the Atlanta Country Club for the past 20 years. He received wide acclaim during the Georgia water crisis in 2000, and was the key member of a team that produced a water management template for golf courses that was endorsed by the Georgia EPA and recognized by the Governor as a proactive method of water use and conservation. The best management practices developed by this team were incorporated on more than 97% of the Georgia golf courses by 2007.



**Mark Esoda**

Click here to watch the video of Mark's induction: [Esoda highlights](#)

## Jump Start High Traffic Areas



### A Florida Regional Update

by [Todd Lowe](#), agronomist

Golf cart and other vehicle traffic has taken its toll on bermudagrass health over the past few months and has created a ragged appearance in high traffic areas. Bermudagrass growth decreases significantly when nighttime temperatures drop below 50°F and eventually ceases to grow at all. Florida golf courses receive most of their play at this time, and continual traffic removes green turfgrass leaves and exposes the tan colored underlying stems. The soil in high traffic areas also becomes compacted, and this further reduces turfgrass root growth and oxygen uptake.



Although there continues to be a few cold nights, a gradual temperature increase over the past few weeks has caused the bermudagrass to green up throughout the region. Golf course roughs have been especially responsive to increased soil temperatures, and are maintaining better color and overall quality. Now that sustained bermudagrass growth and recovery can take place, several cultural practices are recommended to improve turf quality.

***Cart traffic causes a ragged appearance on bermudagrass courses during the winter months.***

[Read on to see the cultural practices recommended.](#)

## Strategic Planning



### A Southwest Regional Update

by [Brian Whitlark](#), agronomists

Your club may be one of the most successful in the region, so why should you consider a strategic plan? Although you may take great satisfaction in your success to date, you should consider a strategic plan to invest in ideas that will keep the club responsive to market conditions and competition. A well-developed strategic plan will justify your decisions going forward and position the club for whatever the future has in store. A strategic plan will help the club to stay among the leaders in the private club community in your region. When formulating a strategic plan, you should consider the following twelve national trends that will likely have the greatest impact on clubs over the next five to ten years. These trends were identified by Mike Leemhuis, CEO/GM of Congressional Country Club ([gm@ccclub.org](mailto:gm@ccclub.org)) and consultant Fred Laughlin ([flaughlinaz@mac.com](mailto:flaughlinaz@mac.com)) in an article titled *Gauging the impact of national trends on private clubs*, published in Club Management, November/December, 2010.

[Read on to see the trends identified by Mr. Leemhuis and Mr. Laughlin.](#)

## USGA Green Section Regional Conference Schedule

### Mark your calendar!

by the Green Section staff

The Green Section's regional conferences are some of the most unique in golf. Typically, the audience is made up of a cross-section of industry professionals and golfers. Presentations are geared to this diverse group so that everyone gets information they can take back to their course and put to good use. Be sure to check the list below to find the conference site near you and mark your calendar!

<b>NATIONAL CONFERENCE</b>		
February 11, 2011	Orange County Convention Center	Orlando, FL
<b>FLORIDA REGION</b>		
May 13, 2011	Naples Beach Hotel	Naples, FL
<b>MID-ATLANTIC REGION</b>		
March 8, 2011	Country Club of Virginia	Richmond, VA
March 15, 2011	Woodholme Country Club	Pikesville, MD
<b>MID-CONTINENT REGION</b>		
April 4, 2011	Willow Creek Country Club	Houston, TX
December 14, 2011	Overland Park Convention Center	Overland Park, KS
<b>NORTHEAST REGION</b>		
March 8, 2011	Rhode Island Convention Center	Providence, RI



**SOUTHEAST REGION**

March 22, 2011

Charlotte Marriott Executive Park

Charlotte, NC

**NORTHWEST REGION**

March 9, 2011

March 17, 2011

March 28, 2011

April 5, 2011

Holiday Inn

Whitefish, MT

Lakewood Country Club

Lakewood, CO

Mid-Pacific Country Club

Kailua, HI

Fircrest Golf Club

Fircrest, WA

**SOUTHWEST REGION**

March 14, 2011

March 28, 2011

Green Hills Country Club

Millbrae, CA

Foothills Golf Club

Phoenix, AZ

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