

The USGA Green Section Record



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2011 U.S. Open Congressional Country Club, Bethesda, Maryland

Congressional CC is Ready - And So Are We!

Mike Davis (USGA executive director) and Tom O'Toole Jr. (chairman, Championship Committee) discuss the challenges that were overcome to get Congressional where it is - ready to host golf's 111th national championship. ([Watch the video](#) - 2 minutes).

The Turf

Turf, golf and environmental awareness make for a great game! ([Watch the video](#) - 30 seconds).

Firmness Of Greens

The USGA has developed a tool that is used during championships to measure the firmness of putting greens. Green Section Senior Agronomist Darin Bevard shows how this tool is being used to help prepare the greens at the Open. ([Watch the video](#) - 1 minute).



Checking green speed with the Stimpmeter is just one of the many measurements taken during the preparation of the greens for a championship.

Course Preparation

Take a look at this behind-the-scenes photo montage of some of the maintenance practices utilized to prepare the course. ([View the slide show](#)).

Can Your Course Play Like Congressional?

Green Section Mid-Atlantic Director Stan Zontek discusses how the maintenance at an Open site is different from the maintenance at your golf course. ([Watch the video](#) - 2 minutes).

How Green Speed Is Measured

USGA Agronomists Darin Bevard and Patrick Gross demonstrate the proper use of the Stimpmeter - the USGA's tool for measuring green speed. ([Watch the video](#) - 2 minutes)

Much, Much More

There are additional videos, photo galleries, live scoring, and a great deal more on the [Official Site of the 111th U.S. Open](#).

Survival of Bluebirds on Golf Courses

Researchers at the College of William and Mary document the survival of eastern bluebirds fledged on and off golf courses.

by Allyson K. Jackson and Daniel A. Cristol



Unlike their brightly colored parents, juvenile eastern bluebird fledglings are gray/brown colored to help with camouflage. Young fledglings are weak flyers and thus vulnerable to predation.

Birds are particularly visible residents of golf courses, and few are more attention-grabbing than the eastern bluebird. Eastern bluebirds prefer to nest and forage in areas at the intersection of forest and field. Golf courses, with their juxtaposed fairways and trees, are prime real estate for bluebird nests. Bluebirds are secondary cavity nesters because they nest only in cavities that have been excavated first by another species. Historically, they nested in old woodpecker holes, but, in the present day, they nest successfully in artificial nest boxes. Many local bird clubs and golf course managers now provide nest boxes for bluebirds, which attracts them to golf courses in high numbers. However, it is unknown how successful bluebirds fledged on golf courses are at surviving to produce offspring of their own, and how the survival of golf course fledglings compares to non-golf sites.

Allyson K. Jackson, M.S., BioDiversity Research Institute, Gorham, Maine; and Daniel A. Cristol, Ph.D., Professor of Biology, Institute for Integrative Bird Behavior Studies, Department of Biology, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.

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

Regional Updates



Northeast Region News Update

by [Jim Skorulski](#), senior agronomist

June has brought some long-awaited heat and drier weather conditions that have helped saturate golf courses in the northern parts of the region and pushed the growth of seedling plants in winter-damaged areas. It did not come without a big price, however, as some violent thunderstorms and even tornadoes left a destructive and deadly path across central Massachusetts. Portions of the Veterans Golf Course in Springfield, Mass., remain closed as the staff continues to clean trees and other debris left in the wake of the storm.

The changing weather brought with it some disease activity, including dollar spot disease, red thread, leaf spot, brown ring patch and, surprisingly, Fusarium patch. It did not take long for isolated dry spots to pop up following the windy and dry conditions.

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



Florida Region

Rain, Rain, Please Come Today

by [John H. Foy](#), director

June 1 marks the beginning of the Atlantic hurricane season, and typically by this date afternoon thunderstorms occur on a regular basis throughout Florida. However, a record-setting drought continues to plague the state. Palm Beach County, the Treasure Coast region, and the southeast coast have been especially hard-hit and are experiencing rainfall deficits of 30 inches or more for the past

12 months. A Phase 1 water use restriction (15 percent reduction) was mandated for all golf courses in the South Florida Water Management District; and on June 1 monthly allocation reductions also took effect, further reducing the water available for irrigation. The result is a marked increase in drought stress and off-color turf on golf courses.



Along with increased fairy ring and localized dry spot problems on putting greens (L), cart and equipment traffic damage is much more of a problem on Florida courses because of the severe drought (R).

During recent Turf Advisory Service visits, a greater incidence and more severe outbreaks of fairy rings are occurring on putting greens due to the drought and heat stress. Adjustments in course management programs are essential to minimize turf damage and loss until rainfall occurs on a regular basis.

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



North Central Region

The Theory Of Relativity

by [Bob Vavrek](#), senior agronomist

It's been an interesting spring across the upper Midwest; waiting, waiting and waiting for a sustained period of warm weather to arrive. There have been short teasers, such as two consecutive days of temperatures above 100 degrees last week, but sweater weather returned within 48 hours of the oppressive heat. The numerous courses affected by significant winterkill have suffered the most. Recovery has progressed at a snail's pace and many greens are still affected by localized areas of thin and bare spots just waiting for *Poa annua* to ultimately fill into the voids.

Attempts to encourage rapid recovery on greens have varied widely between courses. Some courses have done little more than spike in a little bentgrass and apply starter fertilizer, while others in Minnesota have constructed propane heated tents over damaged turf to increase soil temperature enough to germinate bentgrass in April. No doubt, some techniques have performed better than others.



Raising the height of cut on greens to 0.175" - 0.200" will facilitate faster recovery from winter injury. Covering a green during early spring to raise soil temperatures and taking the putting surface out of play will also help promote rapid healing.

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

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by the USGA Green Section Staff

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USGA Green Section
P.O. Box 708
Far Hills, NJ 07931-0708
908.234.2300



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