

The USGA Green Section Record



March 11, 2011 -- Volume 49, Number 10

On Course *With Nature* - Coexisting With Coots

Doing what is right is not difficult and it doesn't cost all that much.

by [Joellen Lampman](#), director, Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program



Photo courtesy of iStockphoto.com ♦ 2010

A small duck-like bird, the American Coot's black body, red eyes, and white beak make it one of the more easily identified waterfowl. A flock of coots is sometimes called a "commotion" or a "swarm." Property managers in the South will recognize the sentiment behind these names, as they can be an unwelcome nuisance during the cooler months. Swarms can swell to 1,500 birds, resulting in damaged turfgrass from aggressive feeding, digging, and defecation.

Native to North and Central America, the American Coot has also been found in parts of Europe. Coots prefer shallow freshwater ponds and marshes, making them common visitors to urban ponds, but can also be found in coastal waters. Osprey and bald eagle sometimes prey upon adults. A number of animals, including raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, and snapping turtles, will prey on coot eggs and nestlings.

Coots are opportunistic feeders and will eat aquatic vegetation and algae, fish, tadpoles, crustaceans, snails, worms, insects, and eggs of other marsh birds. They will steal food from other waterfowl, especially diving ducks as they return to the surface with aquatic plants from the bottom of the pond. They also feed on agricultural crops and turfgrass.

Because of their adaptability, large numbers, and disregard of most attempts to shift them, there is still much debate over how best to control coot damage. There is one golf course in California, however, that has learned to coexist with the coots for a number of years.

[Read on to see how this course dealt with Coots](#)

Oh No! Not Again!

Aerators are firing up all over the country.

by the Green Section Staff

There are two sounds being heard on golf courses all over the country as spring makes its way south. The first is the sound of aerator engines starting up. This is followed almost immediately by the collective groan of golfers. Aeration may be the most cursed and discussed golf course maintenance practice. While it is no secret that golfers hate it, we can assure you that no golf course superintendent looks forward to it either. So why do they do it? The short answer is that aeration is the most effective tool at the superintendent's disposal to ensure the rootzone remains capable of supporting healthy turf.



For those that want to learn a little more about the why's and how's of aeration we have assembled a collection of articles, videos, and webcast recordings, developed by the Green Section staff and turfgrass scientists over the years. This is by no means a complete list since this topic has been written about in Green Section publications since the August, 1922 issue of the *Green Section Bulletin*.

Print articles

["Putting green aeration: It is more important than you think"](#)

["FLOG - What turfgrass would call it if given a choice!: Turfgrass is a living entity that has no voice in creating playing conditions for the game of golf. If turfgrass could talk, what would it say?"](#)

["Weigh your aeration carefully"](#)

["Get the most bang for your buck when cultivating greens"](#)

["Aeration: Get it done!"](#)

["Customized cultivation: What is the goal of your cultivation program? The most effective long-term benefits are achieved from customized cultivation"](#)

["Aeration and topdressing for the 21st century: Two old concepts are linked together to offer up-to-date recommendations"](#)

Multimedia

["Why Aerating A Course Is Vital"](#) (video)

["Why aerate greens?"](#) (animation)

["Aeration - Does Tine Size Matter"](#) (webcast recording - no recording key required)

Research articles

["Organic matter dilution programs for sand-based putting greens in Virginia"](#)

["Aeration timing and topdressing color to enhance creeping bentgrass green recovery"](#)

["Comparison and evaluation of cultivation techniques on ultradwarf bermudagrass greens"](#)

["Summer irrigation and aeration on creeping bentgrass putting greens: Research at the University of Maryland reveals important insight for managing bentgrass greens during summer"](#)

["Cultivating to manage organic matter in sand-based putting greens: University of Arkansas researchers provide important insight for managing organic buildup on putting greens"](#)

To find even more articles about aeration you can search the entire *Green Section Record* using the Turfgrass Information File. Simply follow this link:
[Search the Green Section Record](#)

Bentgrass Still Works In The South



A Mid-Continent Regional Update

by [Bud White](#), director

A superintendent recently pointed out that with all the deliberations about converting bentgrass to bermudagrass in the South and lower transition zone, no one seems to be discussing the qualities of bentgrass in the same region.



A firm and high quality bentgrass green in late July in southern Oklahoma.

There are many courses in the South with wonderful bentgrass greens. Yes, summer is difficult, but many superintendents have great bentgrass greens for nine months of the year, excellent greens for two months, and very good greens for one month of the year. That's not a bad track record. Bentgrass in the South is a solid part of the turf industry, but these conditions do not exist without the talent and hard work of the golf course superintendents who take care of them.

It is often believed that bentgrass greens are wet, soft, and poor during the summer, and are not good in September and most of October while recovering from the stressful summer. That assumption cannot be made as a general rule. I see some ultradwarf greens that are not up to their potential during the prime growing season - a situation nearly always based on the maintenance and growing conditions. No one grass serves every situation, and each site needs to be carefully assessed to decide which grass species will perform better.

On a relatively lateral line from about North Dallas through Charlotte, NC will bermudagrass perform better than bentgrass over a ten-year average? Yes! Is it always a better choice for courses in the South? No!

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

Some Do's And Don'ts As The Golf Season Approaches



A Mid-Atlantic Regional Update

by [Keith Happ](#), senior agronomist

Patience Everyone!!

Most golfers are chomping at the bit to get out and play some golf. Television golf has teased those who are still waiting for the snow to melt, the ground to thaw, and the grass to start growing. Golf course superintendents are cleaning up winter debris and getting ready to implement programs to get the playing surfaces ready for what many golfers hope is an active season of golf. Remember, no matter how much golfers and superintendents want to get going, we just can't rush Mother Nature.

Many superintendents have taken full advantage of winter opportunities to complete projects out on the golf course. For example, superintendents have topdressed aggressively during breaks in the winter weather. Golfers, don't be surprised if you see some sand on the greens when your course is opened for play. The sand provides protection for the grass and many other agronomic benefits. There may be some minor negative effects on playing quality, but these will be short lived. When the weather allows, the grass will grow and the sand will be incorporated into the turf canopy.

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

Spring Time In Florida



A Florida Regional Update

by [John Foy](#), director

The opening of Major League Baseball preseason training camps and the PGA Tour coming to Florida are two more signs that spring has arrived. The return of warm temperatures and sunny, dry days has been favorable for the resumption of turf growth and recovery from typical winter-season course wear and damage. Yet, course management concerns, such as nematodes, mole crickets, bermudagrass stunt mites and a lack of rainfall are being encountered on recent Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visits.

The winter and spring months are typically the Florida dry season. However, below-average rainfall in 2010 resulted in state-wide deficits ranging from five to 20 inches for the past 12 months. This raises concerns about progressive salt level build-ups in putting green rootzones, even when good quality irrigation water sources are utilized. Periodically, conduct a flushing irrigation cycle to move salt accumulations out of the rootzone area so that this is not a growth-limiting factor. Venting with small-diameter, solid tines or a water-injection cultivation a day or two prior to a scheduled flushing irrigation cycle is recommended. While these operations cause minimal or no surface disruption, being able to work them into the schedule is a challenge at many courses during peak seasonal play.

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

Green Section Record Archive (digital)

Looking for a previous issue of the *Green Section Record*?

The *Green Section Record* has been published under various names since 1921 and is composed of an amazing collection of full-text articles and photos. This collection is stored and maintained by the wonderful library staff at Michigan State University in the **Turfgrass Information File (TGIF)**. All past issues of the *Record*, right up to and including this one, can be accessed free-of-charge by following this link.

[Search the Green Section Record](#)



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Green Section Record (ISSN 2156-5813) is published weekly via electronic mail by the United States Golf Association◆, Golf House, Far Hills, NJ 07931.