

The USGA Green Section Record



March 25, 2011 -- Volume 49, Number 12

Golf Digest 2011 Green Star Awards

Does your resort deserve recognition?

by [John Barton](#), *Golf Digest International Contributing Editor*



Sun River Resort - one of three Green Star Award winners in 2009

In 2009, *Golf Digest* launched the annual Green Star Awards, recognizing the leading golf resorts in America that demonstrate the very best in sustainable, efficient and innovative environmental practices. The four 2009 winners were Barton Creek Resort, Kiawah Island Resort, Pebble Beach Resorts, and Sunriver Resort (details at www.golfdigest.com/magazine/environment2009). The sole winner in 2010 was Madden's on Gull Lake (www.golfdigest.com/magazine/2010-10/green-star-award).

Golf Digest is now accepting entries for the 2011 awards and solicitation letters will shortly be sent out to all leading American resorts. If your resort, or a resort you know of, deserves recognition, please ensure an application is completed by the deadline of Friday, April 22, 2011. For further details please contact [John Barton](#) at john.barton@golfdigest.com.

Green Section Education Conference Presentations - Part II

Two more presentations made by the Green Section staff at the 2011 Golf Industry Show

by the Green Section Staff



Put yourself in the audience at the Green Section Conference held at the 2011 Golf Industry Show

For the 34th consecutive year, the annual Green Section Education Conference was held in conjunction with the 2011 Golf Industry Show (GIS). This year's program, held on February 11th, addressed the theme, "Lessons Learned Come in All Forms." The Green Section's staff totals 420+ years of experience, and the session highlighted some of the lessons learned and changes witnessed in the turfgrass management field.

We are conscious of the fact that economic challenges have made it more difficult for people to attend the GIS, and, with this in mind, we are sharing the Green Section presentations in this publication. Over the coming weeks you will find written summaries of the presentations and links to the video of the actual conference presentations.

Part II - this week's presentations:



The Good Book

[David Oatis](#), director, Green Section North-Central Region

Most turf managers agree that growing the grass represents only a fraction of what is required of today's golf course superintendents, and the importance of all the other things is enormous. That's why I think this turf tip is so significant.

The Grounds Department Information Booklet or "The Good Book," as I call it, is a small, simple, and inexpensive way to vastly improve your communication and maintenance programs. It comes from Keith Bartlett, golf course

superintendent of St. Georges Golf and Country Club in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, host of the 2010 Canadian Open Championship.

[Read the article](#)

[Watch the video](#)

Bringing Back Brushing

[Brian Whitlark](#), director, Green Section Southwest Region



Turf managers are always looking for a way to improve the quality of their putting surfaces. This article focuses on a simple strategy that will yield better greens. Brushing greens before mowing offers surfaces that are smoother and contain less grain. In Dr. Beard's book *Turfgrass Management for Golf Courses*, brushing is defined as ". . . the practice of moving a brush against the surface of a turf to lift nonvertical stolons and/or leaves before mowing to produce a uniform surface of erect leaves."

What should turf managers expect from brushing? They should expect to see an improvement where it matters most - in putting quality. Furthermore, turf managers should expect to see benefits such as:

- Grain reduction
- Raising stolons and shoots, which produces a better cut.
- A less injurious technique than vertical mowing or grooming, and therefore can be used more frequently and during periods when growth is not aggressively active.
- A method for *Poa annua* seedhead reduction.

[Read the article](#)

[Watch the video](#)

Is Your Course Environmentally and Economically Sound?

Is the course maintained in a manner consistent with the available budget and labor?

by the Green Section Staff

The game of golf faces two difficult issues affecting every course in the country - environmental and economic sustainability - and both require attention. Environmental sustainability is impacted by water and wildlife issues. Economically, the cost of maintenance and shrinking free time for golfers presents challenges. A common obstacle is unrealistic expectations about course conditioning. Fortunately, there is plenty of room to adjust expectations without damaging the integrity of the game.

To help these efforts, the USGA staff has assembled [a list of questions](#) that every facility should consider regarding best management practices (BMPs) for sustainability. The goal is to help courses assess their own situation and develop actions to improve. There never will be an end point; the journey is one of continual progress and improvement.

This week's question:

Is the course maintained in a manner consistent with the available budget and labor?

Should the predictions prove true that the economic challenges already facing the golf industry will continue to grow, most courses will have to implement steps to reduce labor costs. Careful purchasing decisions for fertilizer and pesticide products can save some money and are worth consideration, but the "800-pound gorilla" in every maintenance budget is labor. Facilities that have to make major reductions in expenses are almost certainly going to reduce the number of hours spent taking care of the golf course. The obvious step is to



Are you allocating resources in the right areas on your course?

look for areas where labor hours can be reduced and adjusting expectations while still maximizing the playing quality and long-term agronomic health of the course.

Information to help implement this strategy at your course:

[Form vs. function: The "WOW" factor can be costly](#)

[Dollars and sense: Making it in a tough economy: In these hard times, superintendents have to be extra creative](#)

[Plan your work, work your plan: Know what it costs](#)

[Nothing comes for free: Any maintenance practice that provides long-term improvement will require money and short-term acceptance of reduced playability, inconvenience, or both](#)

[Less turf + less water = less cost: Preparing a turf assessment plan can help find ways to save](#)

[It's about time: A comprehensive time/labor study can help prioritize limited resources](#)

[All aboard! Part 1: Working together has never been more essential](#)

[All aboard! Part 2: Working together has never been more essential](#)

[Golf course maintenance budget survey: How does your course compare?](#)

[Bunkers: Can your golf course afford them?: Due to the high cost of maintaining them, bunkers are an obvious place to look for ways to save money](#)

[Precision Turfgrass Management: A new concept for efficient application of inputs](#)

Webcast Recording

Winter Injury on Putting Greens in Northern Areas

by [Adam Moeller](#), agronomist, Northeast Region

Winter injury on putting greens unfortunately occurs at many northern golf courses each year. This webcast outlines some of the factors involved with the recent winter injury on putting greens in the Northeast Region. Recovery from winter injury and prevention strategies also are addressed in this presentation.

[Watch the video](#)



Courses Generally Emerging From Winter In Good Condition



A Mid-Continent Regional Update

by [Ty McClellan](#), agronomist

Golf courses throughout the upper Mid-Continent region are transitioning out of winter dormancy, and most cool-season playing surfaces have been mowed at least once. Early indicators of turf health are mostly positive; there does not appear to be nearly as much winterkill as in recent years.

Of course, March and April are known to have large temperature swings, plenty of rain, and occasionally snow. As turfgrasses come out of dormancy they lose much of their winter hardiness, which means they are very susceptible to damage if severe cold snaps occur, as they often do in March and April. Crown hydration injury (a type of winterkill injury to turf) is still a real risk wherever water pools and freezes at the surface. As with extremes of any kind, *Poa annua* is especially vulnerable to damage, whereas creeping bentgrass and Kentucky bluegrass are much more resilient.



Varying rates of spring green-up for different bentgrass varieties are evident on a tee at a Chicagoland course.

It's understandable that the golfing community is chomping at the bit to tee it up as soon as turf begins shifting from brown to green. Green colored turf, however, does not signify that active growth has begun. Rather, there are still several weeks before soil temperatures warm into the sixties. Until then, there is little or no turf recuperative potential, which leaves it unable to recover from daily traffic. This is why even a few rounds of golf can be damaging during the winter and early spring. Mostly, however, it is important to understand that courses are in their most vulnerable state during these transition periods, especially if soils are saturated and soft. Play and traffic during wet soil conditions at this time of year may result in:

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

Update From The Sunshine State



A Florida Regional Update

by [Todd Lowe](#), senior agronomist

The warm season turfgrasses that exist on Florida golf courses resume their active growth cycles at this time of year, and golf courses are taking on a healthier shade of green at this time. The continual increases in air temperature gradually cause the soil temperature to increase, and active bermudagrass growth generally occurs as soil temperature at the 4-inch depth climbs above 65F.

To read more from Todd about traffic management, localized dry spots, water restrictions, and seedhead control [read the rest of this update.](#)

St. Patrick's Day Symposium and Salute!

A Northwest Regional Update

by [Derf Soller](#), agronomist



March 17th, 2011 found the Golf Foundation of Colorado and the USGA Green Section presenting an educational symposium at Lakewood Country Club, Lakewood, Colorado. Along with the educational program, Dennis Lyon was presented with the USGA's Ike Grainger Award, honoring him for his 25 years of volunteer service to the USGA. Dennis currently serves on the USGA Green Section Committee, and previously he volunteered his time on the USGA Public Golf Committee.

Dennis is no stranger to the folks in Colorado. With the recent announcement that he will be given a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame, as well as recently being the 2011 USGA Green Section Award recipient, Dennis has collected a pretty nice trifecta of very prestigious recognitions --- all very well deserved. Congratulations again, Dennis.

Another Coloradoan also recently received national recognition. Mr. David Brown, superintendent of Flatirons Golf Course, Boulder CO, recently was crowned champion of both the Championship flight and the Senior Division flight of the 2011 GCSAA Golf Championship held in Orlando, FL. Dave has competed for many years in the event, most years playing well. Congratulations 'Brown Dog' from your many friends around the country for your recent championship victories.



Dennis Lyon (center) received the USGA Ike Grainger Award honoring him for his 25 years of volunteer service to the USGA. Presenting the award were Derf Soller agronomist NW Region (right) and Larry Gilhuly, director, NW Region (left).

[Read on for notes from elsewhere across the Rocky Mountain area](#)

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*](#)



Looking for something?

The USGA Green Section Portal

A Valuable, Free Resource

Take a minute to visit the Green Section's portal at <http://gsportal.usga.org> to find information regarding upcoming live webcasts and links to recordings of more than 30 previously-delivered webcasts and announcements of upcoming USGA Green Section activities, education conferences, and meetings.

[Visit the USGA Green Section Portal](#)

Important Links

[USGA Privacy Policy](#)
[USGA Green Section Home Page](#)
[USGA Staff Contact Information](#)
[Turf Advisory Service Information](#)
[USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Online \(TERO\)](#)

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



◆2010 by United States Golf Association◆

Permission to reproduce articles or material in the USGA Green Section Record is granted to newspapers, periodicals, and educational institutions (unless specifically noted otherwise). Credit must be given to the author, the article's title, USGA Green Section Record, and the issue's date. Copyright protection must be afforded. To reprint material in other media, written permission must be obtained from the USGA. In any case, neither articles nor other material may be copied or used for any advertising promotion, or commercial purposes.

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