

The USGA Green Section Record



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On Course With Nature Welcoming Wildlife - Wild Turkeys

A simple feeder supports native birds

by Joshua Conway



Wild turkey feeder at The Bear Trace at Harrison Bay.

From holiday entr e to contender for the national bird, the wild turkey is an iconic part of the American landscape. Widespread throughout eastern and the central United States and Canada, the wild turkey once ranged from southern Maine, west through southern Ontario to central South Dakota, south to eastern Arizona, and east to Florida. However, with the arrival of European settlers and the ever-changing landscape, wild turkey populations soon declined to the point of near extirpation by 1935. The combination of habitat loss from agriculture, the destruction of mature nut-producing trees, excessive hunting, over-grazing by livestock, nest flooding, unfavorable climatic changes, and predation has led to the rapid decline of a bird population that was once more than ten million.

Fortunately, the wild turkey is also known as one of the greatest wildlife restoration success stories. Vigorous restoration programs and regulated hunting seasons in 49 states have allowed turkeys to once again inhabit most of its ancestral range. In fact, some population studies indicate a natural range expansion resulting from the protection afforded to this highly valued public game resource. The concept that a wildlife species is a public trust resource is what allows all wildlife restoration to be successful.

What follows is the success story of how the staff at one golf course decided to try to invite more turkeys to their property and ended up doubling the initial population.

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

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Bunker Preparation For The U.S. Open - in 1926

Differing opinions on bunker maintenance is nothing new

by the Green Section Staff

In 1926, the National Open Championship of the United States (as the U.S. Open was called in those days) was held at Scioto Country Club in Columbus, Ohio. In May of that year, an interesting article ran in the Green Section's **Bulletin** (the early predecessor to the **Green Section Record**). The article detailed Scioto's preparations for the championship and discussed such issues as the various grasses on the course, Donald Ross' design characteristics, and even their fertilization programs.

While golf course superintendents will find the above interesting reading, everyone who plays and works in the game will likely find it interesting, if not humorous, that even in 1926 there was significant disagreement regarding the playing quality and maintenance of bunkers. Consider the following quote from the article:

There has been a lot of discussion among players regarding bunker treatment. Some clubs believe in filling the traps with grooves for important events. Worcester last year during the National Open left the traps smooth, and the players were apparently more puzzled than if they had been grooved. As a matter of fact, traps that are left smooth require a greater variety of shots than traps that are ridged or grooved. If the traps are left smooth, the player may be faced with any one of three shots; the ball may be lying perfectly clean, where it can be chipped out; it may be under the face of the bunker, when a cut shot would be required; or, as is very often the case, it may be resting in a footprint, where an explosion shot would be demanded. With the grooved or ridged type of treatment, it is invariably an explosion shot that is required, and variety is almost entirely eliminated. The British rarely, if ever, smooth or manipulate the sand traps, preferring to let the element of luck be the deciding factor.

Nothing has been definitely decided as to how the bunkers will be conditioned at Scioto for the National Open Championship. In my own humble opinion, however, any hazard, no matter what its nature, if well placed is, regardless of conditioning, perfectly able to give a good account of itself. - Mr. George Sargent.

We can only imagine that Mr. Sargent would be amazed that 85 years later players still disagree on what makes a good bunker.

[To read the entire article follow this link.](#)



The eighth hole at Scioto Country in 1926 prior to that year's U.S. Open championship

Fore The Golfer

It's time we give you credit for your efforts!

by the Green Section Staff

Many a *Green Section Record* article has been written discussing the need for golfers to take better care of the course they play, and no doubt more will come in the future. However, it is equally important to recognize that many players care a great deal about "their" course to the point of spending their own time, labor, and money to help with the upkeep.

The Green Section would like to recognize such efforts and share them in the *Record* in the hope that other players will follow suit. Send us a picture or two along with a short description of how the players at your golf course contribute to its care. Send the pictures and write-up to Jim Moore at jmoore@usga.org.

This week's example comes from the Canterwood Golf and Country Club in Gig Harbor, Washington.

Cart Path Edging

Cart path edging. Just the words instill a lack of excitement for any staff member. Even less excitement is found on those golf courses with asphalt where a two-step approach of power edging and then hand removal is needed.

However, at a time when economic issues have reduced staff sizes, Scott Young, CGCS at Canterwood G&CC was able to get needed assistance for this task. Scott simply asked the membership via email if they could come out on a Monday morning in March at 8:00 AM prior to the 11:00 AM starting time. Come they did with shovels provided by the club and some of their own to completely finish each nine on successive Mondays. The maintenance staff had previously completed all the power edging the Friday before each work party. Between 10-15 members showed up to work with the maintenance staff on this task with the maintenance staff providing needed hot coffee and the final cleanup of the paths with backpack blowers. Only greens and tees were

completed during this phase of the operation, but this is one maintenance staff that knows their membership is on the right path!



Staff and members working together at the Canterwood G&CC to improve the appearance of their course.

Regional Updates



Mid-Atlantic Region April Showers Bring... More Rain In May

by [Darin S. Bevard](#), senior agronomist

The spring weather continues to provide challenges. Milder temperatures have been the rule, which has been great for turfgrass growth. However, frequent rainfall events are making golf course grooming difficult in many parts of the Mid-Atlantic Region. Complaints about thick, difficult rough and inconsistent green speed have been prevalent in recent visits. For most golfers, common sense tells them why these issues are present, but it does not do much to ease their frustration. Many good golf days have been washed out, and when they can get out on the course, they are met with less than perfect conditions because maintenance staffs cannot groom the golf course on a routine basis. Be patient, and realize that just about everybody is in the same situation, and soon enough, we will probably experience long stretches of dry weather. It just seems that our weather has been the average of extremes in the last few years!



Frequent rainfall and warmer temperatures are producing rapid turfgrass growth. Thick, penal rough has been a source of frustration for the golfers. Excessive clipping yields and lack of routine maintenance schedules are major sources of frustration for superintendents. Too much rain is not good for any part of the golf business.

This update also includes Darin's observations on *Poa annua* seedhead control, bermudagrass overseeding transition, and spring dead spot control on bermudagrass so be sure to [read the rest of this update](#).



Northwest Region From The Mountains To The Prairies

by [Derf Soller](#), agronomist, Northwest Region

"O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain! "

This first stanza of the song, *America the Beautiful*, came into my head on recent travels across our vast Northwest region. The skies were definitely spacious, but the mountains were more white than purple, and the plains seemed a little bit more windswept than fruited!



(L) Some mountain golf courses are still largely covered with snow. Note the putting green cleared off at the top of the photo taken May 6th. (R) Plains courses that struggled with winter desiccation found slow recovery this spring, as seen here in mid April.

Although many golf course areas are in full growth, we seem to be lagging behind in the Central Rocky Mountain Region. Record snow in Colorado (500+ inches at Breckenridge Ski Area) and Utah mountains (>800 inches at Snowbird) have kept upper elevation courses covered with lots of snow , and those that have melted off are certainly behind in their turf growth activity. The plains areas don't have the lingering snow, but they have had mostly cool temperatures and spring winds that have kept soil temperature below optimum for good turf growth.

Areas of winter damage, whether from excessive snow and ice in the mountains, desiccation from a long winter, and lack of moisture and high winds, need proper temperatures to jump-start and encourage good turf recovery.

The delay of recovery has hindered the ability of some courses from starting annual spring cultural activities. This is actually ok, as actively growing turf will recover more rapidly than turf that is still dormant. But at recent TAS (Turf Advisory Service) visits, discussions with superintendents and course officials seem to be starting down the wrong path! [To learn how, read the rest of this update.](#)



North Central Region The Bentgrass Blues

by [Bob Vavrek](#), senior agronomist

Bentgrass must have the blues, because it sure isn't green yet. Golfers from the upper Midwest still remember the unusually early warm weather last spring and opportunities to play many enjoyable rounds of golf during late March and early April. That memory has made some golfers very impatient with putting green conditions so far this season; albeit a season that has barely begun.

Much of the annual bluegrass has snapped out of its winter funk, well, at least the *Poa* is still alive after 100+ days of ice cover at some courses in Minnesota and northern Wisconsin. In contrast, bentgrass is still relatively dormant throughout the Region, which makes for some bumpy, sickly looking, patchwork quilt playing surfaces, especially at old courses that possess many different types of bents and *Poa* growing in tight, discrete colonies.

Courses that aggressively cored the greens this spring in spite of the sluggish turf growth have been very slow to recover, which only fans the flames of the golfers' discontent. No doubt, it was a good time to drop down a tine size to minimize surface disruption or postpone cultivation until soil temperatures warm up a bit.



Any form of turf stress to greens, such as winterkill, vole damage or cultivation has been very slow to recover this spring. Turf conditions will improve significantly when a sustained period of warmer weather occurs.

Golfer unrest this time of the year is an issue - one that Bob discusses in greater detail in the [rest of this update](#).



Mid-Continent Region

Where Do The Roots Go When There Is Too Much Water?

by [Ty McClellan](#), agronomist

Talk about a case of the extremes! Much of the upper Mid-Continent Region experienced three days in the 90 degrees last week (including some portions of Kansas topping 100°F). This warm-up stimulated cool-season turfgrass growth in the northern areas of the region as soil temperatures finally rose into 60 degree range. Those with bermudagrass or zoysiagrass observed the first significant growth of the season. Fast forward to this week and nighttime lows have plummeted to produce consecutive mornings of frost slamming the brakes on warm-season turfgrass growth.

However, this update is really about another extreme occurring in the region - H₂O (water). Portions of Illinois and Missouri have been inundated with rainfall during April and early May resulting in historic flooding. This certainly puts the decisions we make in the golf and turf industries into perspective. Meanwhile, most of Kansas and portions of Nebraska are in the early stages of drought. From a golf course maintenance standpoint, the preference is to control the water applied to a course so drier is nearly always better. For golf courses, the effects of drought can really only be seen in non-irrigated areas.

Since wet conditions cause many more turfgrass maladies than dry, this update focuses on courses suffering from too much H₂O. Briefly, waterlogged soils lead to:

- Lack of soil oxygen (i.e. anaerobic)



- Root dieback / shallow root system
- Reduced root uptake of nutrients and water
- Accumulation of toxic soil gases
- Reduced rate of natural organic matter decomposition
- Greater fungal disease pressure
- Increased compaction proneness to traffic

Prolonged wet conditions in the spring hinder deep root development. A root system like this provides a lot of insurance for warm and cool season grasses prior to the stress of summer.

[Learn how to deal with these issues by reading 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.

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