

The USGA Green Section Record



May 27, 2011 -- Volume 49, Number 21

Fore The Golfer

The "One, Two Punch" For Putting Greens

by Todd Lowe, agronomist, Florida Region

Ed. note: While this article is regionally based, it is appropriate for all parts of the country.

Golf courses in our region are beginning, or will soon begin, their summer aeration programs. Soil cultivation is quite contentious with golfers, but is much needed on Florida golf courses at this time.

Florida putting greens accumulate a significant amount of organic matter. The nearly 12-month growing season in some areas of Florida, and the quest for green conditioning, encourages rapid buildup of thatch and organic matter. As a result, cultivation practices like core aeration, verticutting, and sand topdressing must be conducted to keep up with the pace of bermudagrass growth.

Most courses core aerate putting greens three to four times with 1/2-inch or larger hollow tines. Ideally, the first aeration would occur in mid-May, with each subsequent aeration implemented every six weeks. With so many corings, the most common complaint we hear on summer TAS visits is, "The aeration holes seem to be just healing, when the greens are punched yet once again."



A typical rootzone from a Florida putting green. This green was aerated with 1/2-inch hollow tines and is awaiting the second aeration once the holes are filled with sand.

[Read the rest of this article to learn how to address this problem.](#)

New Grasses For Golf

The search for cold-hardy bermudagrass cultivars

by [Dr. Mike Kenna](#), director, USGA Green Section Research



Although bermudagrass originated in Africa, it has proven to be one of golf's most versatile grasses ranging throughout the world (pictured here in Australia).

To expand golf's role in the sustainable use of environmental resources, the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program continues its 80+ years of funding research to develop turfgrasses with lower water and pesticide use. One project at Oklahoma State University focused on new bermudagrass cultivars that used less water and pesticides in the summer while greening up earlier in the spring.

Oklahoma State University developed two new cold-hardy, vegetative bermudagrass cultivars, 'Northbridge' and 'Latitude 36'. Developed under the experimental names OKC1119 (Latitude 36) and OKC1134 (Northbridge), the cultivars were licensed to Sod Solutions for sale and distribution in the transition zone and southern areas of the United States. Both will provide slight improvements over 'Patriot' bermudagrass, particularly for traffic tolerance and spring green-up. The turfgrass quality and texture are comparable to 'Tifway' bermudagrass, which is a popular choice for golf course fairways and athletic sports fields.

The major strengths of 'Latitude' and 'Northbridge' are exceptional turf quality, fine texture, improved winter hardiness, early spring green-up, and high sod density and strength. The combined performance data indicate these new cultivars have less risk of winter injury than 'Tifway', while providing equal or higher turf quality. In addition, the turf quality and sod tensile strength of the new cultivars is much improved over 'Midlawn'.

Darin Bevard, senior agronomist with the USGA Green Section, had an opportunity to see 'Latitude 36' earlier this spring. "The grass greened up well ahead of Patriot. I can't tell you specifically by how much, but when I saw it, 'Latitude' (1119) was green while Patriot was still dormant," said Bevard. Sod Solutions is in the process of recruiting additional sod producers. Robert Gurgel of Sod Solutions has three producers participating to-date (one in MD and two in VA).

Cold-hardy bermudagrasses with early spring green-up are a potential replacement for cool-season grasses in the lower transition zone climates. Although they go dormant with the onset of winter, bermudagrass has the positive attributes of reduced water and pesticide use during the summer months. Both of the new bermudagrass cultivars have been extensively tested in field evaluations located throughout the U.S. (see [2007 National Bermudagrass Test](#) or [2010 USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Summary](#)).

A Green Section Point Of View

Putting Green Consistency

What it is, and what it is not!

by [Larry Gilhuly](#), director, Northwest Region



During my USGA Turf Advisory Service visits to golf courses, many words are used by those in attendance. Words like fun, tough, difficult, demanding, and beautiful show what each player thinks of the golf course as a whole. However, when asked about certain portions of a golf course, the word consistency crops up as the most commonly used word. The primary focus is on two playing areas: bunkers and greens. Let's take a look at both the perception and reality of how this simple word now dominates the way a golf course is maintained.

Let's start with the word itself.

Rolling is a common method to achieve consistency on the day you play

"Consistency - steadfast adherence to the same principles, course, form, etc., marked by harmony, regularity, or steady continuity: free from variation or contradiction."

This word has a place in the game, but to assume that golf should be the same every day would require a very large dome over the golf course to eliminate all natural elements, a trained person following every group to rake footprints in the bunkers, every bunker built with identical slopes, and greens prepared multiple times during the day if your tee time changes.

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

USGA Green Section Internship Program

Meet The 2011 Green Section Interns

by the Green Section Staff

The USGA Green Section Internship Program provides selected students the opportunity to travel with Green Section staff members during Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visits for one week between May and August 2011. USGA staff agronomists conduct on-site TAS visits to bring a wealth of research results and practical information on construction and maintenance directly to golf course superintendents and course officials. The goal of the internship program is to provide students with a broad view of the golf course industry and the opportunity to learn about golf course maintenance through the perspective of the Green Section agronomists.

If you are a student or if you know a student who is interested in the Green Section's Internship program contact [Kimberly Erusha](#) at kerusha@usga.org.

[See which students were selected for this year.](#)

Green Section Interns - Where Are They Now?

by [Pat Gross](#), director, Southwest Region

Since the USGA Green Section's Internship Program was first introduced a total of 18 students in the Southwest Region and more than 170 students throughout the country have participated in the program. Many have moved on to careers in golf course management. One of the first students in the Southwest Region to participate in the program was Mike Souza from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. During the summer of 1998, he took time away from his internship doing course construction at Arrowcreek Country Club in Reno, Nevada, for his one week USGA internship.

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



Mike Souza was part of the original class of USGA Green Section interns in 1998. He now showcases his grass growing talents at Richmond Country Club, in Richmond, California, where he has been the superintendent since 2003.

Regional Updates



Southwest Region

Two Turf Tips For Summer Aeration And Irrigation

Improvements

by [Brian Whitlark](#), agronomist

June and July are right around the corner and there is no better time to be prepared for fairway summer core aeration and improving the irrigation system. At a recent Turf Advisory Service visit in the Sacramento, CA area, a superintendent was good enough to share two tips: the first offers the potential to greatly improve clean-up efficiency of the clean-up process following core aeration, and the second involves adding irrigation stations easily, without the need to run wire back to the field satellite. [Read the rest of this update.](#)



Northwest Region

Now You Seed It, Now You Don't

by [Larry Gilhuly](#), director, Northwest Region

Spring is the time of year when all plants like to return to normal and strut their stuff. In the world of turfgrass, no grass seems to enjoy the spring more than the hated/loved *Poa annua*. In the Pacific Northwest (commonly referred to as *Poa annua* central) this grass has received its signal from nature with full bloom occurring all over the region. However, a recent visit to Palouse Ridge Golf Course at Washington State University (WSU) shows at least one very impressive method to eliminate the seeds and dramatically reduce the overall *Poa annua* populations on fairways. [Read the rest of this update.](#)



Northeast Region A Rough May

by [Adam Moeller](#), agronomist

A few days of dry weather has been a welcomed respite from the deluge of rain throughout the Northeast in April and May. With luck, drier weather will continue as we head towards Memorial Day, a prime golfing weekend throughout the country. Due to the frequent rain, golf courses have battled a multitude of weather-related and agronomic problems over the past few weeks.

Penal, thick rough has been a constant source of discussion on golf course visits recently. The growth rate of the rough turf, combined with saturated soils that are prone to tire rutting, has been next to impossible to keep up without damaging the soil structure or producing excessive clipping piles. The abundance of heavy rain also has been frustrating to many golfers who want to play, even though the course is nearly underwater. Playing on puddled and saturated greens is never good for the turf, and particularly damaging to soil structure. Golf cart restrictions have been necessary at most facilities. It is difficult to predict the damage potential from a few golfers playing on saturated greens, but everyone should agree that nothing good comes from golfer traffic in these conditions. Thankfully, these frustrations diminish as the soils dry. [**Read the rest of this update**](#)

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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.