



February 03, 2012 -- Volume 50, Number 03

Ultradwarf Bermudagrass Tinting Study

How do different paints and pigments affect the surface temperature of greens?

by [Brian Whitlark](#), agronomist, Southwest Region

The practice of overseeding bermudagrass greens for the winter is growing less common with each passing season. There are three major reasons for this trend. First, a difficult economy has superintendents seeking ways to reduce maintenance costs without sacrificing playing quality. Eliminating the cost of seed and the winter-long mowing requirements of the overseeded greens saves significant dollars. Second, dormant bermudagrass greens offer outstanding putting quality providing some of the smoothest and fastest surfaces players will see all year. Third, the processes of establishment and transition are eliminated. Not only is this much easier on the bermudagrass greens, it puts an end to the loss of



putting quality at two of the most enjoyable times of the year to play golf - spring and fall. The one real drawback to not overseed is the loss of winter color. To overcome this, superintendents across the country are experimenting with a variety of dyes and paints to maintain a green tint, even on fully dormant greens. As the practice has caught on, questions began to arise concerning whether or not tinting greens in this manner might result in a warming of the surface and possibly help bermudagrass begin growing earlier in the spring.

To see how the different dyes and paints impacted surface temperature, [read the rest of this article](#).

Select the links below to watch three videos about this study.

[Paint study introduction](#) (3:05)

[Spray techniques](#) (2:00)

[Surface temperature results](#) (3:01)

On many golf courses, competition includes more than the game

by [Jeff Nus](#), Ph.D., manager, Green Section Research.

The USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program has long supported [Audubon International's](#) effort to appreciate, understand, and maximize the usefulness of golf course out-of-play areas as wildlife habitat. In addition, the USGA provided grants to several research projects through the [Wildlife Links Program](#), clearly demonstrating that golf courses can provide needed habitat for many species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, besides providing the playing surfaces for golfers.

A popular activity is the construction and placement of bluebird nest boxes that can bolster bluebird populations on golf courses (2). As noted by Dr. Mark Stanback, researcher at Davidson College (Davidson, N.C.) populations of eastern bluebirds have increased dramatically since bluebird nest box programs were first introduced around 1980 (3). However, wildlife ecologists know that the fierce competition for food and habitat creates a delicate balance between species. When conditions favor one species, the numbers of other species needing similar requirements often decline.



Male eastern bluebird (photograph by A. Mercadante)

[Read the rest of this article](#)

Research Update

Managing Fairy Rings On Golf Courses



Fairy ring fungi can produce either mushrooms (toadstools) or puffballs. Researchers are investigating methods to control damage caused by these common soilborne fungi.

In an effort to test the effectiveness of new products advertised for golf course use, the USGA is funding a project on controlling fairy ring in golf course turf. Fairy rings are circular arcs of mushrooms or puffballs produced by soil fungi that emerge from turf areas, especially after heavy rains occurring mid-summer and later. High amounts of ammonium, or droughty, hard-to-wet soil, are symptoms associated with fairy ring fungi. Over time, the presence of fairy ring fungi can result in arcs or circles of darker green, as well as dead grass, affecting the playability of fairways and putting quality of greens.

The cooperative research project by scientists at Penn State University, the Chicago District Golf Association, and Washington State University is comparing combinations of soil aeration, fungicide and soil surfactant applications, and an ammonium-scavenging soil amendment to reduce fairy ring symptoms. Aeration, fungicides, and surfactants are standard

practices to limit the damage caused by fairy ring fungi, but the idea of using an ammonium-scavenging soil amendment is new. Once dragged into the aeration holes, it is reasoned that the amendment may limit ammonium build-up in the soil and reduce turf damage. To date, however, no advantage was seen in adding the amendment over the standard practice of aeration, and applying fungicide or wetting agents to fairy ring-affected areas on the golf course.

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Regional Updates



Florida Region

By [John Foy](#), director

The 2012 Winter Season - So Far, Not Too Bad



(L) Peak winter season play and recent frost are having an impact on roughs and other areas of South Florida golf courses. (R) At courses where firm and dry conditions are desired, spot watering is necessary to prevent the onset of drought stress.

The winter golf season in Florida is now in full swing. Unlike 2010 and 2011, enjoyable mild to warm temperatures have kept golfers on the course. However, rounds continue to be down and some clubs are still struggling to achieve desired membership levels.

Until the second week in January when a cold front came through and frost was experienced, bermudagrass remained green and continued to grow a little. This growth helped mitigate the impact of winter season traffic and wear. Now, at all courses, roughs have gone off-color, and, especially in locations where concentrated cart traffic

occurs, the turf has literally been beaten down. It will be six to eight weeks before sustained, active bermudagrass growth resumes in Central to South Florida so it is essential to intensively manage cart traffic to limit the damage as much as possible. For more on this topic, read Todd Lowe's November 16, 2011 regional update, [Dealing with Cart Traffic](#).

[Read the rest of this update](#)



Southeast Region

By [Patrick O'Brien](#), director

Brown Is Back In The Southeast Region - And It's Good For The Game

Golfers in the Southeast Region are familiar with the growth cycle of warm season turfgrasses. When it's warm, they are green, and after a frost or two they turn brown. Once they turn brown, Green Section agronomists begin fielding questions from golfers and course officials about overseeding tees, fairways, and roughs. While some courses continue to overseed, many more have recognized that brown fairways have a lot going for them. Consider the following advantages of forgoing overseeding.

[Read the rest of this update](#)



Northwest Region

By [Larry Gilhuly](#), director

Seeing The Light

Much has been written about the impact trees have on a golf course ([Made in the Shade?](#)). But what about those facilities that do not have the luxury of starting up a chain saw to minimize or eliminate the problem? No, not golf courses but stadiums used for other sports.

Safeco Field serves as the home to the Seattle Mariners. For more than a decade the Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass field has done very well with the hard work of the grounds crew. Led by Bob Christopherson, the entire field is treated similarly to a putting green with regards to aeration and sand topdressing. The one-inch mowing height and a sub-surface heating system have created a perfect environment for turf growth. Add the capability to



The combination of shade and traffic will always result in difficult growing conditions as noted in the photo from Safeco Field (L), and other stadiums with large stands (R) that create unique shade issues. (Photos courtesy of SGL)

close the roof with a movable top and severe winter conditions can be countered. However, one side of the field (first-base line) and the infield suffer from excess shade. A chain saw is not an option in this case. Over the years several sections of turf have required a complete sod replacement.

[Read the rest of this update](#)



Mid-Central Region

By [Bud White](#), director

Spring Pre-Emergence Application And Drought Conditions

The drought in the lower part of the Mid-Central region has persisted for so long now that virtually every aspect of golf course maintenance has been impacted. Superintendents are making major changes in their management programs to compensate for turf that has been weakened by the combination of prolonged drought stress and intense traffic thanks to a mild winter. One area that is particularly challenging is the task of weed control.

Most superintendents use a combination of pre- and post-emergence herbicides to keep the course as free as possible from noxious weeds. In normal years, when the turf is healthier, there are many choices when it comes to weed control. Weakened turf however, is more prone to injury from the herbicide. For example, some herbicides cause what is commonly referred to as "root-pruning", a condition in which the root system is stunted. Another common side effect is the inhibition of the ability of stolons to send new roots into the soil as they spread across the soil surface. This is often referred to as "pegging down". Fortunately, there are some pre-emergence products that keep such damage to a minimum. Unfortunately, they are expensive.

[Read the rest of this update](#)



Mid-Atlantic Region

By [Darin Bevard](#), senior agronomist

Bonus Golf: Take Note Of The Risks

For the past several weeks there have been many opportunities for golfers to get out and enjoy the weather, and their favorite golf course. With the extreme wet conditions of late summer/early fall, this bonus golf has been great for the golfers, and has helped the bottom lines of many golf courses. The mild weather has also rekindled the debate over winter play and the potential agronomic downside of excess traffic, especially on greens.

In the last couple of years, frequent snowfall and cold temperatures have rendered the winter play conversation a moot point. This winter we have been blessed with plenty of days to play golf, and golfers who want to play. The result - the back and forth debate over whether greens should be open or closed. There is no right or wrong answer to this question because of the different needs of individual golf facilities and the different weather conditions.

Common sense dictates that winter play is bad for grass, especially greens. Extra traffic under often marginal conditions causes wear. The



While some light snow has fallen at times and reminded us that it is winter, milder than normal temperatures have been the rule. Nicer weather has allowed for more golf than usual to be played

difficulty is quantifying the cost of this damage from the perspective of impacts on in-season playing quality in addition to the cost to repair damage that may (or may not) occur with winter play.

during the winter months, but there may be consequences in the spring.

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North Central Region

By [R.A. \(Bob\) Brame](#), director

Changing To Better Serve



As they say, if you don't like the weather wait a few minutes and it will change. We all know that change is a reality of life, and yet the weather pattern so far this winter remains warmer and wetter than normal for most of the North Central Region. Ohio, as an example, has set several rainfall records for January - not snowfall, rainfall. Courses in the more southern reaches of the Region are already thinking about soil temperatures and grassy weed germination. Change is coming, but when and how? Remember the guiding mantra with regards to weather's impact: *hope for the best, but plan for the worst.*

Change is coming to the Green Section as well. Ty McClellan, formerly an agronomist in the Mid-Continent Region, is now our Manager of Green Section Education assisting Jim Moore, program director. Jim and Ty, together with the Green Section agronomists, will be providing a significantly wider range of educational content that will be interesting and useful to everyone associated with the game. As always, we remain devoted to sharing scientifically-based, environmentally-sound information via the Turf Advisory Service, supporting the world's largest turfgrass and environmental research program, and assisting with course preparations for the USGA's national championships. With Ty's changed responsibilities the North Central Region has expanded west. I will provide agronomic support for central and southern Illinois (south of I-80) in addition to Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. Bob Vavrek, senior agronomist, and my partner in the Region, will provide agronomic support for northern Illinois (north of I-80), Iowa and Nebraska in addition to Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

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2012 USGA Green Section National and Regional Conferences

[NATIONAL CONFERENCE](#)

March 2, 2012

Las Vegas Hotel & Casino

Las Vegas, Nev.

[MID-ATLANTIC REGION](#)

March 20, 2012
March 27, 2012

Oakmont Country Club
DuPont Country Club

Oakmont, Pa.
Wilmington, Del.

MID-CONTINENT REGION

April 2, 2012	Belmar Golf Course	Norman, Okla.
December 12, 2012	Overland Park Convention Center	Overland Park, Kan.

NORTHEAST REGION

February 7, 2012	Rhode Island Convention Center	Providence, R.I.
March 15, 2012	Alpine Country Club	Demarest, N.J.
March 20, 2012	Blue Hill Country Club	Canton, Mass.
March 27, 2012	Oak Hill Country Club	Rochester, N.Y.

SOUTHEAST REGION

March 27, 2012	Grandover Resort	Greensboro, N.C.
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NORTHWEST REGION

February 8, 2012	Peaks and Prairies GCSA	Sheridan, Wyo.
March 26, 2012	Waverley Country Club	Portland, Ore.

SOUTHWEST REGION

March 26, 2012	Gainey Ranch Golf Club	Scottsdale, Ariz.
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FLORIDA REGION

May 18, 2012	Naples Beach Hotel	Naples, Fla.
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USGA Green Section - Turf Advisory Service

For more than 80 years, the USGA Green Section's sole mission has been to collect and distribute information on proper construction and maintenance of golf courses.

First started in 1953, this service permits individual facilities to reap the benefits of on-site visits by highly skilled USGA agronomists located in Green Section offices throughout the country. Each agronomist visits more than 100 courses annually. Their experience helps golf course staff and officials produce the best possible golf turf for the dollars that can be spent. The TAS's purpose is not to tell anyone how to run a golf course or what products to buy. Rather, it seeks to bring a wealth of information and an impartial yet concerned perspective regarding turfgrass growth requirements, how these requirements might best be managed for golf, and ideas that other golf courses have found to be beneficial.

The Turf Advisory Service is used by the biggest and smallest golf courses. Golf keeps America beautiful, and day after day, year after year, the Green Section helps golf courses produce better turf for better golf. Your golf course should be a TAS subscriber.

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[Sample TAS Report](#)

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The Green Section agronomists are the most knowledgeable, respected, and impartial golf-turf consultants in the world. Backed by the USGA, the Green Section's services provide dependable recommendations that course officials can count on.

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