



GREEN SECTION RECORD

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Self-Inflicted Problems Can Be Hard To Swallow

The superintendent's job is hard enough, so do not hurt yourself!

by [Darin Bevard](#), USGA Green Section



Implementing aeration strategies on cool-season turfgrass during severe summer stress may cause damage that requires weeks to recover. Simply because the date of aeration is on the calendar should not mean there are not other options. It is important for both superintendents and golfers to be flexible.

During the last two years, weather extremes throughout much of the country have provided major challenges for golf course superintendents and their ability to maintain expected playing conditions. The intense heat in the Southeast, the extreme drought and heat in the southern U.S., or flooding rains experienced in much of the Mid-Atlantic Region and portions of the Midwest, just to name a few, remind us that Mother Nature reigns supreme in the golf course business. In spite of these weather extremes, expectations for golf course conditions remained at a high level. This places the superintendent in a precarious position, and decisions are often made

to satisfy immediate expectations when the goal should be to keep the grass as healthy as possible during stressful conditions. Short-term thinking usually contributes to turfgrass decline and deteriorating playing conditions that could have been avoided. What follows are a few suggestions for superintendents and golfers to limit some of the most common causes of self-inflicted injury.

[Read the rest of this article](#)

Changing Times In Ultradwarf Bermudagrass Management

At a growing number of courses, consistent and fast putting speeds are being provided at a higher height of cut.

by [Todd Lowe](#), *USGA Green Section*



Low mowing can create fast putting speeds but can be detrimental to turf health.

Golf course superintendents are tasked with providing good playing conditions. For putting greens, "good" playing conditions generally correlates to desired putting speed, smoothness, and firmness, with speed being especially important for some golfers. Putting speed has increased significantly over the years and is continually trending upward. There are a variety of techniques and tools for increasing putting speed, but the most common has been to simply decrease mowing height. Over the past several decades, equipment manufacturers have improved technology to produce sophisticated mowers that can cut at less than 0.1 inch. Likewise, turf breeders have developed varieties that can tolerate lower heights of cut. Yet, the envelope has been continually pushed and turf is stressed when maintained constantly at a low height of cut.

A significant shift in techniques for providing fast putting green speeds has been occurring over the past several years in the Florida Region. This new way of providing optimum playing conditions is radically different from traditional techniques. Whereas conventional conditioning through low mowing stresses turf health, this newer technique does not because it does not utilize low mowing.

[Read the rest of this article](#)

The Fun Factor

Part 5 of the USGA Green Section Education Conference presentation series

by the USGA Green Section staff

For the 35th consecutive year, the annual Green Section Education Conference was held in conjunction with the 2012 Golf Industry Show (GIS). This year's program, held on March 2, addressed the theme, "Improving Your Golf Course Management Odds." 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.

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. This is the fifth presentation in the series. In this recorded video, [Chris Hartwiger](#), senior agronomist of the Southeast Region, discusses the importance of maintaining your course in a manner that will help keep the game fun for your best customers.



"The Fun Factor" is the fifth presentation of the USGA Green Section Education Conference at the 2012 Golf Industry Show

[Watch "The Fun Factor" video](#)

Links to the previous presentations are found below:

[Reclaiming Perimeter With Core Aeration Plugs](#)

[If I Were The Emperor Of Golf For A Day](#)

[Moisture Meters For Better Golf Turf](#)

[Showcase Your Value At Your Facility](#)

USGA Research Update

What is causing the yellowing and thinning of bentgrass putting greens?

by [Mike Kenna](#), Ph.D., director, Green Section Research

At several golf courses around the United States, a problem concerning the gradual thinning and death of bentgrass greens has created a great deal of concern. Unexplained yellowing and elongation of grass blades has been a nuisance in some locations, while significant damage has occurred on bentgrass greens on other sites.

From 2011 through 2014, the USGA has committed more than \$250,000 toward a range of research projects at universities to understand the cause of this problem and to elucidate effective treatments and best management practices to prevent the yellowing, thinning, and loss of bentgrass putting greens. Research projects are being conducted at Michigan State University, The Ohio State University, North Carolina State University, Clemson University, and the University of Rhode Island.

Many suspected causes of this problem have been suggested, including bacteria, fungi, viruses, and nutrient deficiencies. Efforts are underway to establish methods to diagnose the problem, as well as laboratory, greenhouse, and field experiments to determine if bacteria are causing the thinning and yellowing of the bentgrass. Bacterial investigations are focused on whether hormonal imbalances are occurring from hormones produced by the bacteria or a disruption of bentgrass's hormone metabolism.

The commitment by the USGA to work with university researchers and golf course superintendents over the past year and for the next three years is expected to help provide information on how to properly diagnose and manage this problem.

For more information on this research please see pages 11-14 in the [USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Summary](#).

All Things Considered - A Green Section Staff Opinion

Verify

Don't entrust your career to what others may say alone; establish and monitor control plots to verify a product's usefulness and value.

by [Bob Brame](#), USGA Green Section

It's amazing how seldom control plots are seen during site visits to golf courses. This ultimately means it is amazing how blindly some people rely on others to verify a product's usefulness and value. Clearly, the initial process of deciding to try a product comes from groups and individuals within our industry. This may include superintendents, sales representatives, university extension/research personnel, company tech representatives, or your Green Section agronomist. Yet, the initial favorable comments or testimonials from others should not be the enduring mantra. Establishing and closely monitoring untreated areas or check plots is the only way to verify a product's worth in your specific maintenance program at your particular location.



Establishing a control plot can be as easy as laying out a sheet of plywood prior to making an application. The corners should be carefully marked so that accurate repositioning is possible prior to all subsequent treatments.

[Read the rest of this article](#)

Regional Updates

The USGA Green Section agronomists see an amazing variety of issues and challenges as they visit golf courses across the country. Be sure to read the highlights of each region since many of the topics covered apply to courses everywhere.



Mid-Atlantic Region

This update includes:

Water management tips
Observations on disease activity in the region

[View the rest of this update](#)

Southeast Region



This update includes:

USGA Interns see another side of the industry
Professional development training offered to key golf course personnel

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



North-Central Region

This update includes:

*When she was good, she was very good indeed,
But when she was bad, she was horrid.*

To figure this out you will just have to [View the rest of this update.](#)



Northeast Region

This update includes:

Summer stress on poorly draining greens
Regional disease observations
The impact of humidity on putting green smoothness and pace

[View the rest of this update](#)



Northwest Region

This update includes:

John Harbottle III and his impact on the game

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



Florida Region

This update includes:

Green, fairway and rough cultivation practices

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



Southwest Region

This update includes:

Determining how much water to put on the greens during the 2012 U.S. Open

[View the rest of this update](#)



Mid-Continent Region

This update includes:

Drought induced tree damage and the impact on maintenance budgets

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