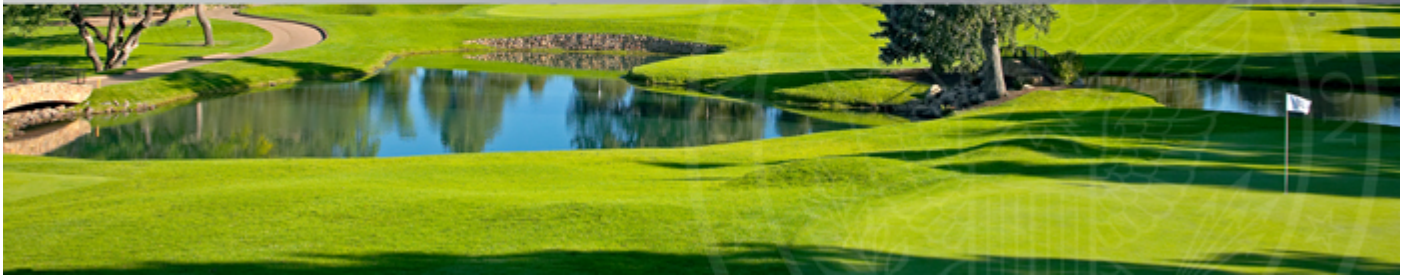




GREEN SECTION RECORD



March 16, 2012 -- Volume 50, Number 06

All Things Considered - A Green Section Staff Opinion

Have You Received The Memo?

by [Chris Hartwiger](#), senior agronomist, Southeast Region

Have you received the memo? Neither have I. Apparently there is a new business model in the golf industry, and courses are doing business in new and different ways, but I'm not sure anyone has taken the time to write advice on what to do. While I might not have the credentials to write a memo for the new business model in golf, I am out on the front lines regularly and would like to make a few suggestions for a memo.

A CHANGING INDUSTRY

The golf and golf maintenance industries are in a state of rapid change. Rounds continue to decrease. Revenue is shrinking. Budgets are down. Almost every measure of prosperity in the game has decreased over the last decade, with sharp declines occurring in 2008 to the present. What is more troubling is the collapse of differentiation in all but the upper-end private club market. On the daily-fee side, "memberships" or annual passes are common. On the mid-level private club side, initiation fees are disappearing if not gone, and various forms of outside play (outings, tournaments, juniors) are sought after. On the bright side, now is a great time to be a golfer, and bargains can be found in just about every city.



[Read the rest of this article](#)

Non-Overseeded Bermudagrass Greens Faster, Smoother, Sooner

But managing them in the winter can be tricky

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



Ball marks on non-overseeded surfaces (left) are far less noticeable than on their overseeded counterparts (right), especially in the fall, when the overseeded greens are immature.

In the desert Southwest, eliminating overseeding on ultradwarf bermudagrass greens is rapidly becoming the new trend, partially due to poor bermudagrass recovery after overseeding, but mostly because golfers have discovered that non-overseeded greens offer better surfaces for more golfing days. In the fall, when many overseeded greens are slow, wet, and prone to pitch marks, ultradwarf greens are at their best. When the overseeded turf is weakening the following summer and ball roll becomes inconsistent, non-overseeded greens often perform far better. However, there are more than a few misconceptions with respect to non-overseeded greens, both from an agronomic and playability perspective, that need be addressed before we move on and discuss specific management strategies.

As a few leading turf managers have already discovered, managing non-overseeded greens in the winter can be tricky, and there are a number of pitfalls that must be avoided. Several misconceptions and pitfalls are summarized in the following points:

[Read the rest of this article](#)

A USGA Green Section Webcast *How To Build Mallard Duck Nesting Tubes*

Mallard Duck Nest Tube Construction at Harrison Bay

Narrated by Paul L. Carter, CGCS
The Bear Trace at Harrison Bay

[Watch the video](#)

Think Twice Before Complaining About Your Course

**An excerpt from the book, *Golf Anecdotes - From the Links of Scotland to Tiger Woods*
by Robert Sommers (Oxford University Press, Copyright 1995)**

Hell Bunker

While it has been relatively stable throughout the twentieth century, the Old Course at St. Andrews evolved over a long period of years. Hell Bunker, a deep and wide depression about 80 yards short of the fourteenth green, began as a much smaller obstacle in 1882, while Old Tom Morris served in the dual positions of professional to the R and A and greenkeeper of the Old Course.

One day an indignant golfer fumed to Morris that the condition of the course was so bad he had had only one decent lie all day, and that was at the bottom of Hell Bunker. His ball lay so well, he was able to play a wooden club from it. Morris's features, usually dark in their normal state, turned black. Immediately he sent a work crew to the site armed with picks and hoes and had them hack away until no golfer could ever again play from Hell Bunker with a wood.



Years later, Gene Sarazen found himself in that bunker during the British Open. Rather than try to advance his ball toward the green, Sarazen had to play backwards, toward the tee. He made 8, and lost by one stroke.

The "Hell Bunker" on number 14 at the Old Course in St. Andrews is partially the result of an angry greenkeeper.
(photo courtesy of Brandon Tucker, Golf Channel)

Regional Updates



Florida Region

Recent Greening May Be Short-lived

Recent visits have seen a vibrant shade of green on many golf courses. Mild temperatures experienced this past winter have kept soil temperatures higher and turf has remained actively growing in South Florida. Temperature patterns continue to trend upwards and as a result the turf is resuming active growth from Orlando south. Semi-dormant roughs that were tan to dull green from lower soil temperatures are now green, especially on courses that have recently applied fertilizers.

Plant pathogens and disease occurrences have been discussed on recent visits. Moderate temperatures coupled with high relative humidity have encouraged diseases. Leaf spot disease continues to plague golf courses, as well as several recent Pythium outbreaks. Diligent scouting is necessary for effective disease management so that fungicides can be applied in a timely manner. The dry season in our region generally occurs from March thru May, and this should help reduce disease activity throughout our region.

For more on mole crickets and isolated dry areas [read the rest of this update](#)



Northwest Region

Pacific Northwest Green Section Conference

During the past several decades the USGA Green Section has conducted a regional conference in either Washington or Oregon in the spring. This conference is aimed at golf course superintendents, club officials, golf professionals, club managers and players. The conference this year will be conducted at Waverley Country Club in Portland, Oregon on Monday, March 26. The site of the conference this year is also the focus of this meeting as Waverley is in the midst of a major restoration program led by golf course architect Gil Hanse. We hope to see all of you in the Northwest Region as we discuss topics related to the game and golf course maintenance. In addition, a rare opportunity to do a walking tour of a golf course restoration will be available after lunch for those in attendance. The following is the program slated for the March 26 conference.

[Agenda and registration information](#)



Mid-Continent Region

Critical Spring Management Factors

The mild winter and early spring has everyone in this region ready for the grass to begin growing, especially at those courses where damage is still present from last summer's drought. To encourage the most rapid recovery possible there are a couple of steps that should be taken right away.

Be sure to obtain new soil and water tests. These tests will help determine which nutrients should be applied and in what quantities. They will also provide insight into the need for a soil amendment such as gypsum to help offset salt accumulations. Spring cultivation practices such as slicing and solid tine aeration will help incorporate amendments into the soil. Hopefully, a gentle spring rain will follow your application increasing efficiency that much more.

Phosphorus and potassium also are very important for spring green-up. They also help promote bermudagrass rhizome and stolon growth as soon as temperatures allow. Early soluble nitrogen fertility is not recommended since utilization is low and pushing foliage growth in the spring can detract from root and rhizome development. For those anxious to see bermudagrass spread over thin areas, remember that until the daytime high and nighttime low temperatures add up to 150°F, lateral growth is very slow.

[Read the rest of this update](#)



Southeast Region

Paul Carter: TurfNet Superintendent of the Year

Certified Golf Course Superintendent Paul Carter of the Bear Trace at Harrison Bay, was named *TurfNet's* Superintendent of the Year at the Golf Industry Show in Las Vegas, Nevada on March 1, 2012. Paul's skills have been known throughout the Southeast for many years and it is nice to see him receive this recognition.

Since his arrival at Bear Trace nearly a decade ago, Paul has led numerous projects that have benefited not only those that play the course, but also the wildlife that live on the course. Below are a few of Paul's accomplishments.

[Read the rest of this update](#)



Paul Carter, CGCS



Mid-Atlantic Region

Here Comes The Growing Season

In the last Mid-Atlantic update, Stan Zontek discussed potential consequences of the "no winter" winter in this region. Little did we know that we would be finding some of the answers to these questions so quickly! Above normal temperatures have continued, and we have been flooded with questions regarding annual bluegrass weevil activity and *Poa annua* seedhead emergence. These are normally questions for the latter part of March or even early April. In the southern part of the region, bermudagrass is beginning to green-up which has brought some winter weed control programs to a halt much earlier than normal. The good news in all of this is that observed rooting in putting greens has been exceptional overall. Both root depth and density have been good for this early point in the growing season.

Annual bluegrass weevil activity has been noted throughout our region in the last 7 to 10 days. On warmer days, populations have been on the move. When should treatments be applied? It is hard to say because we cannot predict the weather. However, with the warmer than normal weather trend continuing, it is safe to say that applications will be earlier than usual. Phenological indicators such as the half green/half gold stage of Forsythia are still important. Growing degree models should also be monitored to provide a guideline for treatment timing. However, aggressive scouting should remain an important part in determining timing of insecticide applications. Keep in mind that the goal is to control female adults before they lay their eggs, not necessarily as soon as they emerge. There is little precedent for treatment strategies following this warm of a winter in much of our region.

Relatively speaking, the weevil is a new and expanding problem in much of the Mid-Atlantic Region, and we still have a lot to learn.

[Read the rest of this update](#)



It's only early March, but warmer than normal temperatures have accelerated the demand for course conditions in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Superintendents can only do so much until the grass really starts growing. Additionally, winter projects may still need to be completed, limiting available resources for early course grooming.

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.

[Turf Advisory Service Brochure](#)

[The Value Of A USGA Turf Advisory Service Visit](#)

[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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