



GREEN SECTION RECORD

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SUPERSTORM SANDY

THE EXTENT OF DAMAGE IS YET TO BE DETERMINED

USGA Staff



It is much too soon to accurately determine the extent of the damage suffered along the Eastern Seaboard as a result of hurricane Sandy. The USGA and the Green Section staff are hoping for the best for all concerned.

With so much loss of life and property, the damage to golf courses might seem inconsequential to many. But for those that put so much of themselves into the care and nurturing of these courses and facilities, there is at the very least, a tremendous amount of work ahead.

We will undoubtedly be writing much more about Sandy's impact on golf over the coming weeks. The Green Section staff is already offering helpful advice in the regional updates found below regarding how best to deal with salt intrusion.

We have also started to collect a few images of the damage that has occurred ([see slideshow](#)). If you have

an image or two you are willing to share send them to jmoore@usga.org and we will add them to the slideshow. Be sure to include the name and location of the course, as well as the person's name who took the picture.

CLEANUP AND OUT

FOCUS ON THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PUTTING GREEN CLEANUP RING, COLLAR AND APPROACH DURING BOTH RENOVATION AND MAINTENANCE

Bud White, director, Mid-Continent Region

The primary focus of golf course maintenance has long been on putting greens, given their impact on the game. That focus usually stops at the cleanup lap, but the quality of the cleanup lap, collar, and approach are critical to the overall playing condition of the putting green complex. These areas also receive the greatest amount of equipment traffic, making them the first candidates to show wear damage. Not surprisingly, they are often the most challenging areas to maintain.

In recent years, however, the cleanup lap, collar, and approach are receiving much greater attention. Golfers, especially low-handicap players, recognize the benefit of top playing qualities such as uniformity, firmness, and lack of grain in these areas and understand how these factors impact play onto and around the putting surface.

[Read More](#)



Soil fumigation of collars and cleanup laps, combined with leveling, is a very detailed operation.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED - A USGA STAFF OPINION

REGRASSING: COMING TO A GOLF COURSE NEAR YOU

Jim Skorulski, senior agronomist, Northeast Region

The concept of regrassing putting greens continues to move northward into more temperate regions where annual bluegrass, i.e., *Poa annua*, is still king. A series of harsh winters, hot summers, continued struggles with annual bluegrass weevil, parasitic nematodes, anthracnose, seedhead production combined with other maladies have forced northern turf managers and golfers to rethink the annual bluegrass management paradigm. Even the most experienced and daring turf managers with almost unlimited resources find it more difficult and expensive to provide fast and firm playing surfaces consistently with annual bluegrass compared to creeping bentgrass.

Now before we go any further, I want to be clear that I am discussing regrassing putting surfaces and not rebuilding greens. There is a major distinction between the two. Regrassing involves working with the existing green complexes but changing the turfgrass species. It may involve some design modification, amendments to the soil, or drainage installations. However, the basic foundation of the greens and their designs are generally undisturbed. I admit the concept is a bold one and not for all golf courses, but there comes a time when we have to ask ourselves when enough is enough. How much longer can we continue to manage an inferior grass when there are better options available?



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KEEPING TRACK

ACCURATE ACCOUNTING OF LABOR HOURS CAN ILLUSTRATE THE IMPACT OF BUDGET CHANGES AND IDENTIFY STAFFING NEEDS

Darin Bevard, senior agronomist, Mid-Atlantic Region



How quickly labor hours can add up. Labor intensive practices such as core aeration can consume most or all of the maintenance staff for an entire day, leaving little to no time for anything else to get done.

You get the news. The budget is going to change. How will this impact golf course maintenance operations? What more could be accomplished with additional resources? What tasks will not be completed or be performed less frequently if the maintenance budget is cut? Will you be able to answer these questions? The largest single line item in virtually every golf course maintenance budget is labor. Thus, when budgets are increased or decreased, funding for labor is likely to be at the top of the list of discussion topics.

It is surprising how few golf course superintendents have closely examined labor needs, at least not in the form of a detailed analysis. At some courses such a study has never been considered, while at others budgets are such that justification of staffing is simply not an issue. Most golf course superintendents broadly estimate the size of the staff needed to complete routine tasks, but rough estimates often lead to inaccurate information. Make no mistake, it takes significant time and effort to complete an initial labor audit and additional time to continue tracking hours over the span of an entire growing season, but it can be well worth it.

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REGIONAL UPDATES



Northeast Region

Hurricane Sandy - The Oct. 29 landfall of hurricane Sandy and its catastrophic impacts will long be remembered by residents in the eastern half of the United States. The effects of this hurricane have been lethal and especially devastating along the Eastern Seaboard impacted by the wind and storm surge. The entirety of the storm's impact is still being determined across many eastern states at the time of this writing, but the damage from the wind, rain and storm surge are extensive. Our hearts go out to all of you who are now dealing with the storm's aftermath. [Read More](#)



Mid-Atlantic Region

Sandy Pounds Mid-Atlantic Region - Reports coming in from the field suggest that the impacts of Hurricane Sandy are far reaching. Coastal golf courses in Maryland and Delaware suffered heavy wind damage. However, saltwater inundation from the storm surge is a far greater concern in these areas. Further inland, heavy flooding occurred on many golf courses, and of course, wind damage.

[Read More](#)

Southeast Region

Helping to Make Golf More Affordable - On Oct. 29 and 30, golfers and varied industry professionals gathered at Southern Pines Country Club in Southern Pines, N.C. to discuss key issues facing golf today. The USGA



Southeast Region agronomists and approximately 100 others attended the Third Annual **Symposium on Affordable Golf**, a conference developed by golf course architect Richard Mandell featuring numerous talks and discussions focused on keeping golf affordable. [Read More](#)



Florida Region

Manage Cart Traffic Proactively - A recent cold front came through our region and brought "Chamber of Commerce" weather conditions in most areas. While it is still considered warm for some migrating snowbirds, year-round Florida residents have appreciated the break from cool weather. Many golf facilities report that play has nearly doubled in the past week and this trend will continue as snowfall in northern states pushes the annual migration of golfers southward. [Read More](#)



North-Central Region

Heads Up! - Does your course have irrigation sprinklers that are below ground level? It is very common to find low sprinklers as a system ages. Settling, freeze - thaw, turf growth and topdressing are the more common issues behind low sprinklers. [Read More](#)



Mid-Continent Region

Fall Management Suggestions - The arrival of cool weather in the region allows superintendents to turn their focus to projects and planning for 2013. [Read More](#)



Northwest Region

Why gamble? Here is how you can hit 21 every time! [Read More](#)



Southwest Region

Practice Facilities - One Level Is Better Than Two - The size of practice facility tees never seems big enough to accommodate golfer activity, especially during periods of slow turfgrass recovery. To make matters worse, it is not uncommon to see tee size wasted where the practice area was designed with two levels. The slope bisecting the two hitting areas is unusable and may reduce tee space by 30 percent or more in some cases. One course visited in the past few months recognized the need to renovate their bi-level practice facility tee and the results from the project have been nothing but positive. [Read More](#)

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