

## APPROACHES: A KEY PART OF THE GOLF COURSE

### FIRM, SMOOTH APPROACHES REQUIRE SPECIFIC MAINTENANCE INPUTS TO ADDRESS UNIQUE ISSUES

Adam Moeller, agronomist, Northeast Region



Landing the golf ball on firm approaches short of the putting green to allow it to run onto the surface is sometimes the best strategy for playing the hole.

The condition of putting greens has long been at the forefront of golf turf management, and rightly so, given that greens play a role in well over half of all strokes in a round of golf (Beard, 1982). After the putting greens, however, what is the next most important playing area on the golf course? I would contest that approaches are one of the most overlooked areas that are extremely important to how a golf course plays. For instance, one can hit a variety of shots to a green, but sometimes a bump-and-run shot is most appropriate. Pitch shots around the greens are also largely influenced by the condition of the approaches. When playing to a front hole location or to a green that slopes from front to back, a soft approach will force you to land your pitch shot on the putting surface, and all but the best shots are likely to end up on the back of the green. A firm approach gives you the option to bounce the ball onto the green and likely is the most reliable strategy to get close to the hole location. A firm, smooth approach will also allow players to putt from the approach in this situation. These are two common examples of why the performance of the approaches should not be an afterthought. Unfortunately, turf management inputs are sometimes lacking on approaches, which leads to poor playability, especially for players who recognize the value of the ground game. In addition to maintenance, other factors that impact conditions on approaches include drainage, irrigation coverage, and contours. This article will outline some common problems observed with approaches in the Northeast and outline the best management practices to produce firm, smooth surfaces.

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ALL THINGS CONSIDERED - A USGA STAFF OPINION

## NUTRITIONISM: BETTER TURF THROUGH CHEMISTRY?

*John Foy, director, Florida Region*



*Along with advances in equipment, there are many more fertilizer options for feeding turfgrasses.*

There are very distinct differences between the basic nutrients needed for plant growth and the foods consumed by humans. However, on the subject of nutrition, there are parallels in the approach of the fertilizer and food industries. These parallels go back to the mid-19th century when the German chemist Justus von Liebig and other scientists studied both plant and human nutrition. Liebig, who is generally credited with being the father of the fertilizer industry, believed protein was the "master nutrient" in animals and likened its role to nitrogen in plants.

Both plant and human nutrition have been and continue to be intensely studied, and many advances have been made in the understanding of these subjects. For food science, the focus has gone far beyond the basics of calories, proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Foods are being analyzed to determine their most basic components, the nutrients they contain. The list of essential nutrients continues to expand, and there is also regular reporting of new research findings on amino acids, carotenoids, antioxidants, and monosaturated versus polyunsaturated fats. The journalist Michael Pollan does not take credit for creating the

term, but he does define the obsession with individual components of food as "nutritionism" in his book *In Defense of Food, An Eater's Manifesto*.

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## TIFGREEN BERMUDAGRASS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

### HOW A TRIP TO TAYLOR'S CREEK GOLF COURSE IN GEORGIA OFFERED AN AGRONOMIC HISTORY LESSON WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY PROVIDING A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

*Patrick O'Brien, director, Southeast Region*



Tifgreen bermudagrass, also commonly known as 328, isn't talked about much these days. It is not even commercially available on a wide scale like it once was. But to say that Tifgreen bermudagrass is not continuing to make a major contribution to the turfgrass industry simply could not be further from the truth. A recent trip to Taylor's Creek Golf Course at Ft. Stewart, Ga., revealed that Tifgreen bermudagrass may have one final encore remaining before it is literally - and figuratively - put out to pasture.

This article is a story about the past meeting the future. Tifgreen bermudagrass is the central character and in the coming pages a tribute is offered to one of the great turfgrass varieties of the past and details offered on how it may forever influence the development of bermudagrass putting greens in the future.

*Among the Tifgreen bermudagrass population changes were several mutations that had adapted well to shade on green number 15.*

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NOVEMBER 6-7, 2012. HILTON DFW LAKES EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE CENTER, DALLAS, TEXAS.

**Golf's Use of Water: Solutions for a More Sustainable Game** will bring together experts from science, government, business, academia and golf to identify and discuss the most challenging issues regarding golf's use of water. With communities continually working to provide sufficient quantities of safe drinking water, it is understandable that water use for recreational purposes is heavily scrutinized. While golf courses contribute to communities by providing green space, positive economic impact and recreation for those who play the game, it is also true that golf course irrigation is a necessary component of their management. It is the responsibility of golf's leadership to ensure that our most valuable natural resource is used in the most forward-thinking, responsible manner. [View the Water Summit agenda.](#)

For more information on the Water Summit, contact [jmoore@usga.org](mailto:jmoore@usga.org).

## REGIONAL UPDATES



### Northeast Region

**A Rough Time Of It** - Many Northeast golf facilities are finding themselves having to seed and renovate larger areas of rough damaged by disease, drought stress, insect damage or traffic. [Read More](#)



### Mid-Atlantic Region

**Leaves Are Turning And So Is The Page On Another Season** - Learn more about the importance of proper fall leaf removal and a look ahead at important deadlines. [Read More](#)



### Southeast Region

**Save The Dates** - The 2012-2013 conference season is well underway. We hope you have made plans to attend one or more turfgrass conferences this year. For your convenience, we have outlined below a few possibilities in the Southeast Region. [Read More](#)



### Florida Region

**For Something A Little Different - The 2012 World Amateur Team Championships** - A recap of the maintenance challenges and successes faced in Turkey for this year's World Amateur Team Championships. [Read More](#)

## North-Central Region

**Time To Bale Some Hay** - Naturalized areas are seldom no-maintenance areas. Controlling weeds and the excess accumulation of organic debris are important tasks to prevent the steady degradation



of some of the most beautiful and environmentally important areas of the course. For tips on managing these areas [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

**Goats, Llamas, and Fireworks** - Waverly CC has added a llama to the crew and solved a 4th of July turf mystery. [Read More](#)



### Southwest Region

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