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The Size of Topdressing Sand

Does it matter?

by [James A. Murphy, Ph.D.](#), *extension turf specialist, Rutgers University*

Superintendents welcome techniques that improve the efficiency of operations on the golf course. The incorporation of topdressing sand into a turfgrass canopy is one of those practices where a gain in efficiency is beneficial. Significant time and other resources can be spent on managing the sand particles left on the putting surface after most of the topdressing is incorporated. These remnant particles are typically large (fine gravel, very coarse, or coarse particles, depending on the quality of the sand) and interfere with mowing and potentially play, if not removed. Blowers can be used to remove these particles, but at the cost of more labor and fuel. Daily mowing eventually removes these large particles, but at the cost of increased mower maintenance through more frequent sharpening and replacement of bedknives and reels.



A significant amount of time and resources is spent on managing the sand particles that remain on the putting surface after topdressing is incorporated.

The incorporation of topdressing sand is more difficult on turf maintained at lower mowing heights and with plant growth regulation that increases shoot density, calculated as the number of turfgrass shoots per square inch. Additionally, newer cultivars developed for putting greens have much greater shoot density compared to older cultivars. Topdressing sand increases the firmness of a putting green surface due to the "bridging" of sand particles within the turf canopy and layer of mat or thatch. However, the bridging among sand particles and with plant material also contributes to the difficulty of incorporating sand.

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All Things Considered - A Green Section Staff Opinion

My three wishes for better golf.

by [Durf Soller](#), *agronomist, Northwest Region*.

In recent years many have written that the game of golf is too difficult, and that this is a primary obstacle against increasing golfer participation. I have the opposite opinion. In fact, I believe learning to play golf is easier than ever due in large part to the many advances in equipment technology and accessibility to so many golf courses



today. What I believe is hurting the game the most is that it seems many of us have lost sight of the goal of having fun when we play. Fun is, and should continue to be, the main reason the majority of us visit golf courses in the first place. Looking back to when we first learned to play the game, we were not concerned about perfect ball lies, consistent green speeds, or manicured bunkers. The intrigue and enjoyment of the game stemmed from being on the course and trying our best to get the ball from tee to green and eventually into the hole. Even more fun was to be had when there was friendly competition with other players.

What if a golf genie were to grant us three wishes to improve the game? What would your wishes be? This is my chance to share mine.

[Read the rest of this article](#)

Still Stinging

University of Florida research compares bermudagrass and seashore paspalum cultivars for their abilities to tolerate nematodes.

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

The crucial component of any turf pest control strategy is to use turfgrass cultivars that have the greatest genetic resistance to that pest. After all, if the turf is genetically resistant to certain diseases or insects, there is less dependency on fungicides and insecticides to keep the turf healthy. Can the same strategy be used for nematodes?

That is exactly what University of Florida scientists wanted to know. According to a 2005 field survey of Florida golf courses by Dr. William (Billy) Crow, associate professor of nematology at the University of Florida, 87% of those courses had potentially damaging levels of plant-parasitic nematodes. With the loss of NemaCur (fenamiphos) in 2007, questions regarding nematode resistance in turfgrass cultivars are more important than ever.



University of Florida graduate student Wenjing Pang takes soil samples of bermudagrass cultivars in an effort to compare them for their abilities to tolerate both sting and spiral nematodes without showing visual decline.

With funding from the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program, Dr. Crow and his colleagues, Dr. Kevin Kenworthy (assistant professor of plant breeding) and graduate student Wenjing Pang, initiated studies to evaluate bermudagrass and seashore paspalum cultivars for their abilities to resist nematode infestations (2, 3, 4, 5). "I am often asked by golf course superintendents if a particular cultivar is resistant or has fewer problems with nematodes than other cultivars," explains Dr. Crow. "I really wanted to have some research results to answer those types of questions. Use of plant resistance and tolerance is the most long-lasting and environmentally friendly method for controlling pests."

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by the Green Section Staff



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Mid-Atlantic Region

This update includes:

Insights on fall aeration, inconsistent roughs, and renovation.

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Southeast Region

This update includes:

Hi-tech tools to evaluate the impact of trees and other structures on turf.

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Mid-Continent Region

This update includes:

Traffic and trees - the drought continues to impact courses.

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North-Central Region

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Relationships and good grass - they have more in common than you might think.

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Northeast Region

This update includes:

Extreme weather conditions can actually help your course in the long run.

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Florida Region

This update includes:

Environmental initiatives including BMP's for Florida golf courses and *Rounds 4 Research*.

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Southwest Region

This update includes:

Poa annua greens enter "The Dead Zone" and take a hit.

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Northwest Region



This update includes:

Why *Poa annua* greens are getting "nervous."

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