



GREEN SECTION RECORD

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USGA WEBCAST

ENCROACHMENT PREVENTION

Bud White, director, Mid-Continent Region

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TWO CASE STUDIES AT GOLF FACILITIES IN DROUGHT-STRICKEN TEXAS HIGHLIGHT THE VALUE OF BUFFALOGRASS AS A LOW-MAINTENANCE TURF REQUIRING LESS WATER

BUFFALOGRASS ON THE GOLF COURSE

Ty McClellan, manager, Green Section Education, and **Bud White**, director, Mid-Continent Region

Let's face it; buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*) is rarely given serious consideration for use on golf courses. It has never been in vogue, but this should change for several regions in the U.S. Before writing off buffalograss as an option for your golf facility, this article features two case studies combined with new information that may be of interest to you.

Familiar to most turf managers is that buffalograss is a low-maintenance, warm-season turfgrass with a slow growth rate and excellent drought resistance. It uses less water and requires less mowing and fertilizer than other turfgrasses common to golf. What you may not know is that significant research and turfgrass breeding efforts have been in place for buffalograss in recent decades. Much of this research was funded by the USGA



Buffalograss works well as a low-maintenance rough, in this case around a zoysiagrass fairway at Briggs Ranch Golf Club near San Antonio, Tex.

and much of it done at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln ([Buffalograss: Tough Native Turfgrass](#) provides a great overview of the history and accomplishments of the buffalograss breeding program at UNL). As a result, there are newer, improved buffalograss varieties now available that possess better density, darker color, finer texture, improved winter hardiness and faster establishment from sod or seed. Newer varieties offer much better quality and playability than previous generations of buffalograss and are better suited for use on golf courses. If you haven't observed first hand recent releases of buffalograss varieties, then you almost certainly have a misconception (and likely bias) against this turfgrass species for golf course use.

[Read More](#)

TREE ROOTS ARE FAR MORE EXTENSIVE THAN MOST REALIZE AND CAUSE TURF PROBLEMS ON IMPORTANT PLAYING SURFACES

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Robert Vavrek, senior agronomist, North-Central Region



Tree roots compete with turf for water and nutrients, yet the stress to adjacent turf is usually ignored. The beneficial effects of severing tree roots become obvious during droughty weather, as seen in the improved turf performance to the left.

To say most golf facilities across the United States are overplanted with unnecessary trees would be an understatement. Myriad turf problems related to dense shade and poor air circulation are topics of considerable discussion and debate during most USGA Turf Advisory Service visits. Trees aren't picky; they cause just as many problems to warm-season turf as they do to cool-season species.

Professional services can be contracted to make an objective evaluation of serious shade problems that affect specific areas of a golf course. Shade issues can also be documented with user-friendly apps for an iPhone/iPad, such as Sun Seeker or Sun Scout. With a little practice, even a quality compass can be used to determine which trees will cause the most shade problems to a particular green or tee. Similarly, a variety of hand-held anemometers are available to determine air movement, or lack thereof, across turf due to trees, brush,

berms, or other obstructions.

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REGIONAL UPDATES



Northeast Region

Spring Is Busting Out All Over - This year's winter weather has been much more normal as compared to last year's extraordinarily mild winter. Not surprisingly, turf is "waking up" much later. [Read More](#)



Mid-Atlantic Region

Maintenance Programs Already Require Compromise - The grass is still dormant or semi-dormant throughout much of the Mid-Atlantic Region. The calendar says spring, but colder than normal temperatures are still delaying turfgrass development. [Read More](#)



Southeast Region

2013 Green Section Regional Meeting in Charlotte, N.C. - On March 25 - 26, almost 200 golf industry professionals gathered at Carmel Country Club to attend the USGA Green Section Regional Meeting. [Read More](#)



Florida Region

Winter Season Damage - Divot and cart traffic damage are frequent topics of discussion during winter season TAS visits to golf courses in Florida. [Read More](#)



North-Central Region

Be Patient - Golf course superintendents often find it very difficult to be patient in early spring when golfers are ready to tee it up. [Read More](#)



Mid-Continent Region

Spring Preparations For Summer - As we move into April, there are a few items courses should evaluate to prepare for summer. [Read More](#)



Northwest Region

"March Natural" - The mountain region is starting to come out of deep freeze and soil temperatures are starting to warm up. This is bringing out golfers for the first few swings of the year. Instead of green turf they will see a lot of a new color described by one superintendent as "March Natural." [Read More](#)



Southwest Region

Dry Winter In California Could Impact Water Supplies In 2013 - April 1 is an important day in California. That is when official measurements are taken on the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, which provides an estimate of the amount of water that will be flowing to nearby reservoirs and how much water will be available for farming and the 37.8 million people in California. [Read More](#)

FOR THE GOLFER

USGA Green Section educational content and resources developed specifically with the golfer in mind.

THIS ISSUE'S FEATURE:

**TV GOLF VS
DAILY PLAY GOLF**

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RESEARCH UPDATE

USGA turfgrass and environmental research impacts the game of golf in more ways than you think.

THIS ISSUE'S FEATURE:

TURF EXHIBITS

U. S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

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