

ULTRADWARF BERMUDAGRASS

SUCCESSFUL PUTTING GREEN MANAGEMENT

Todd Lowe, senior agronomist, Florida Region



Light and frequent verticutting and sand topdressing are adequate for maintaining good playing conditions on most ultradwarf greens, but it is necessary to allow the time for these practices to occur.

Ultradwarf bermudagrasses (TifEagle, Champion, and Mini- Verde) were developed in the 1990s and began being established on Florida golf courses in 1997. These early pioneers laid the groundwork for other golf courses in the South to develop maintenance practices that offered improved putting green smoothness and speed when compared to older varieties like Tifdwarf or Tifgreen. Early research showed TifEagle, Champion, and Mini-Verde provided consistently better playing conditions than other varieties in university trials (Morris, 2003), and such characteristics have proven superior on golf courses as well. In fact, ultradwarfs have now become the standard for putting greens in Florida. We have learned many things about these grasses in the past 15 years, and this article addresses a few key observations that may surprise some readers and hopefully will prove useful at your facility.

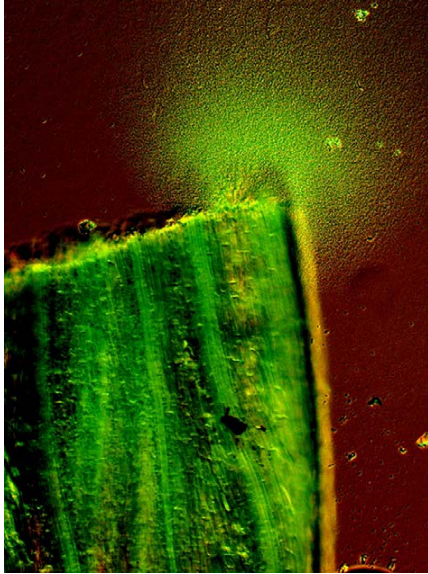
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RESEARCH YOU CAN USE

YELLOW BENTGRASS? BACTERIA MAY BE RESPONSIBLE

Paul R. Giordano, Arielle M. Chaves, Nathaniel A. Mitkowski, Joseph M. Vargas JR.

During the past few years in many regions of the United States, extreme weather conditions and summer stress made managing creeping bentgrass exceptionally challenging. Many of the problems were due to disease



Heavy streaming of *Acidovorax avenae* subsp. *avenae* cells out of the cut end of naturally infected creeping bentgrass stems.

complexes, stress factors, or other disorders. Among these problems, the loss of green color and decline of creeping bentgrass was a mysterious topic widely debated by university researchers and industry professionals since the early reports of outbreaks in the summer of 2010. The debate may have started sometime in 2010, but the problems related to this disease have plagued putting greens for several years. For nearly a decade, golf course superintendents have noticed unique symptoms of elongation, yellowing, and eventual decline on their creeping bentgrass putting greens; however, turfgrass pathologists kept coming up empty and attributed much of the problem to heat stress or other stress-related problems.

Things changed a bit when frustrated researchers at Michigan State University took a different approach by searching for atypical disease culprits after having no luck with the usual suspects. This led to observations of extremely high levels of bacteria pouring out of symptomatic stems of creeping bentgrass plants from a golf course in the transition zone (Figure 1). Not since the 1980s and the days of Toronto C-15 decline had these amounts of bacteria been observed inhabiting creeping bentgrass. This warranted further investigation, which subsequently identified a perpetrator: the bacterium *Acidovorax avenae* subsp. *avenae* (Giordano et al., 2010).

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TIME MANAGEMENT

LOOKING TO ESCAPE REALITY? IT MAY BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Todd Voss, director of golf, Double Eagle Club in Galena, Ohio



Hosting the Central Ohio Golf Course Superintendents Association and spouses at our beach bar.

At the end of one's life, no one ever says, "I wish I could've worked more." I believe golf turf managers may be an exception. In general, as grass growers, we love what we do. We thrive on challenges and the adventure that every day on the golf course brings. Even through hardships of weather, tight budgets, and high expectations, we press on undeterred to present the best possible golf course. Superintendents have passion and energy, which is not often seen in other professions. Through all the pressure and stress, there are concerns. How does one keep the passion? How do you keep your batteries charged? I firmly believe the saying "You have to know what you are working for."

Most call it "R and R." However, we all have different definitions of what rest and relaxation means. Time away from the golf course can be

spent in many different ways. Everyone needs time away, and how you spend that time can help your job performance. Choices about what we do with our free time can be difficult, but I think we can all agree that family time should top the list.

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THIS ISSUE: "GREENS AERATION" BY JIM MOORE

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The *USGA Green Section Record* (ISSN 2156-5813) is published biweekly via electronic mail by the United States Golf Association.

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