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USGA

GREEN SECTION RECORD

VOLUME 51, NUMBER 10 | MAY 17, 2013

HOW IT'S DONE SERIES

LIGHT AND FREQUENT FAIRWAY TOPDRESSING

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A TOUGH ECONOMY IS FORCING MOST GOLF FACILITIES TO REDUCE THEIR OPERATING BUDGETS.

FIVE MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN REDUCING MAINTENANCE COSTS

The value of experience is often underestimated when it comes time to reduce the budget. When cost savings are necessary, carefully consider the many ways experienced staff members contribute to the success of the golf facility.

The purpose of a golf facility maintenance budget is to produce desired course conditioning and playability. When aligned with the intended end product, preferably via written and implemented maintenance standards, the operating budget will ensure that agronomics, economics, and even politics at the golf facility are in proper balance. When there is a need to reduce the budget, it should come with the realization that the end product, in this case the golf course, will likely change. Reducing inputs and expecting the same output is very seldom realistic. This does not necessarily mean that change is bad, but it does point to the importance of being careful with how change is applied. This article will present the top five mistakes to avoid when maintenance costs must be reduced, as identified by the USGA Green Section staff.

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THE NO-TILL METHOD IS A LOWER-COST AND LESS-DISRUPTIVE OPTION FOR CONVERTING FAIRWAYS TO NEWER, IMPROVED BERMUDAGRASS CULTIVARS

NO-TILL BERMUDAGRASS FAIRWAY RENOVATION

Excellent fairway playing conditions can be provided for golfers of all skill levels with new bermudagrass cultivars.

At golf facilities across the Sunbelt of the United States, bermudagrass has been the primary turfgrass species utilized on all playing areas. Since its introduction in the early 1960s, the hybrid cultivar 'Tifway' (commonly known as '419') has been an industry standard for fairways, roughs and tees. However, in recent years, several new bermudagrass cultivars have been introduced with improved performance characteristics and stress tolerances. Compared to previously used bermudagrass fairway renovation processes, the no-till renovation is less expensive and less disruptive. It has been used successfully to convert fairways to new bermudagrass cultivars at a number of golf facilities in Florida and along the lower coast in the Southeast.

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NEWS NOTES

ELLIOTT DOWLING JOINS GREEN SECTION STAFF

Elliot received his bachelor of science degree in Horticulture with an emphasis in turfgrass management from Iowa State University.

The Green Section is pleased to announce Elliott Dowling has been named as an agronomist in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Elliott will work out of the Glen Mills, PA office with Mid-Atlantic Region Director Darin Bevard, helping to develop and disseminate agronomic, environmental and economically viable management practices based on science and practical solutions. His expertise will help golf facilities maintain better playing conditions through the USGA Turf Advisory Service on-site visits, education outreach, and research throughout the five-state region.

Elliott's golf course work experience will serve him well in providing turfgrass management consultation in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Most recently he was golf course superintendent at Cress Creek Country Club in Naperville, IL. He also was the superintendent at the Ivanhoe Club (Ivanhoe, Illinois) and an assistant superintendent at Oakland Hills Country Club (Bloomfield Hills, MI), in addition to golf course internships in Illinois, Colorado, and California.

Elliott received his bachelor of science degree in horticulture with an emphasis in turfgrass management from Iowa State University, and his masters of professional studies degree in turfgrass management from Penn State University. He will begin his new position May 28.

REGIONAL UPDATES

MID-ATLANTIC

Has Spring Sprung? - The on and off weather conditions this spring are causing unusual growth of putting green turf.

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SOUTHEAST

Ask Questions Now, Answer Later - With the growing season in full swing, now is a good time to formulate a few questions that can help each facility evaluate the success of the 2013 season.

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NORTH-CENTRAL

Fairway Fooler - Bob Vavrek investigates the mystery of grainy, lime green patches scattered throughout the playing surfaces during a recent Turf Advisory Service visit.

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NORTHEAST

"Why Are Our Greens So Bumpy? - Cooler weather conditions have caused Northeast golf courses to fall one to two weeks behind. Greens are bumpy, and they won't get smooth until the temperatures warm up.

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FLORIDA

Let the Cultivations Begin - In Florida, cultivation practices generally take place from late spring through late summer. Each practice provides a slightly different benefit and several of them may take place at the same time to produce the desired effect.

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SOUTHWEST

Tools To Expedite Removal Of Aeration Cores From Greens - The time for aerating bermudagrass greens has nearly arrived in the Southwest. This regional update highlights two tools that will reduce labor hours required to clear cores from greens.

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NORTHWEST

The Sandman Cometh…and One Can Hardly Tell - In the last decade a shift has occurred in the Pacific Northwest regarding aeration programs on greens, approaches, tees and fairways.

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MID-CONTINENT

USGA Agronomists Conduct a simulated Turf Advisory Service Visit for CMAA Members - The Mid-America chapter of the CMAA's latest meeting consisted of a mock USGA Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visit to the golf course and its maintenance facility.

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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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