

POA ANNUA MANAGEMENT ON GOLF COURSE PUTTING GREENS

By Fred Velverton, Ph.D., professor and extension specialist, North Carolina State University



Padiobutrazol applied to a putting green severely stunted the *Poa annua* while having little impact on the bentgrass.

Here we are 94 years later in 2015. What kind of progress have we made and what have we learned? We have learned a lot. In terms of progress, well, that is up for debate. To be sure, we have made progress but the problem of *Poa annua* in putting greens still persists. Or is it a problem at all? The answer to this question is simple. It depends on whom you ask. If you are in northern California with pure *Poa annua* greens, you might not think *Poa annua* is much of a problem - stem gall nematode (*Anguina pacifica*) aside. If you are in Dallas, Texas, Washington D. C., Raleigh, N.C., Scottsdale, Ariz., etc., where greens are often composed 50 percent bentgrass and 50 percent *Poa annua*, it is a huge problem.

Let's try to simplify the problem. If you are in a climate where you can successfully grow *Poa annua* year round (does not get too cold or too hot) then *Poa annua* is the species to grow, correct? Not necessarily. Take Paris, France for instance. *Poa annua* thrives in their climate because it does not get very cold in winter or very hot in summer (usually). In fall and winter, the temperatures generally fall between 32 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit (0 to 10 degrees Celsius) and cloud cover is very common during that time of year. Microdochium patch (pink snow mold) thrives in these conditions and is a major obstacle to successfully managing *Poa annua* greens. Add to the equation that there is very limited fungicide availability in France and many other areas in Europe, and *Poa annua* is not a good choice despite the ideal conditions for growth.

In the golf course industry, it is safe to say that *Poa annua* is the plant that we love to hate. However, many successful U.S. Opens have been played on *Poa annua* greens. In mild climates where *Poa annua* thrives, it can be a very good putting surface but the problems with heat tolerance, cold tolerance, disease and uneven growth (just to name a few), can make it a difficult species to grow at certain times of the year. In these areas of the world, if you were to ask golf course superintendents if they had a choice between *Poa annua* or creeping bentgrass, most would choose bentgrass. In climates in the transition zone, it is a little more straightforward: *Poa annua* is considered a weed.

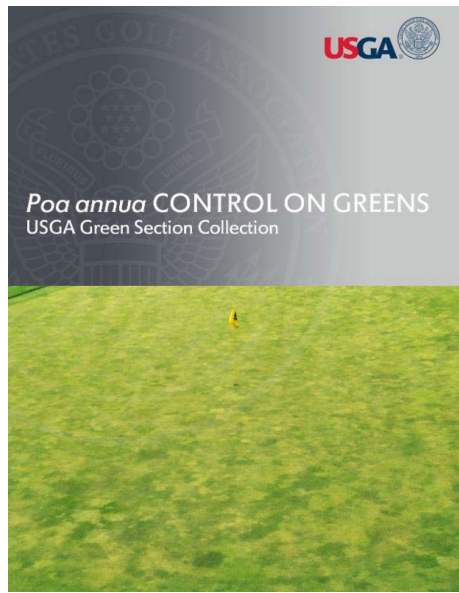
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DIGITAL COLLECTION - POA ANNUA CONTROL ON PUTTING GREENS

We are excited to add a new feature to the Green Section Record in 2015. Each issue of the Green Section Record now will include an interactive digital collection of supporting materials. In addition to the monthly major article, each digital collection will include supporting articles, and a photo gallery and videos that provide additional, relevant information on the subject. The collections can be viewed online in a user-friendly digital magazine format, saved as a PDF or printed. We hope you find this new feature to be an extremely useful resource.

[View The "Poa annua Control On Greens" Collection Now](#)



"It's the Heisman Trophy for the industry, and you see its magnitude when you look at the list of winners before me." Dr. Patricia J. Vittum

That is Dr. Vittum's, or, more simply, Pat, as she is well-known across the industry, version of being selected as the 2015 recipient of the USGA Green Section Award. The award has been presented annually since 1961 in recognition of distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass. [Read More](#)

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A NEW AGRONOMIST JOINS THE USGA GREEN SECTION STAFF

Addison Barden has recently been named as the new agronomist for the USGA Green Section's Northeast Region. He is based in the Glen Mills, PA office as he joins the Northeast Region agronomy staff - Dave Oatis, Elliott Dowling, Adam Moeller and Jim Skorulski.

Addison brings to the USGA a rich combination of academics focused in plant insects and diseases, coupled with broad practical experience at golf courses in both the north and south. Most recently, he was golf course superintendent of the West Course at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY. He has additional experience at North Jersey Country Club (Wayne, NJ) and Ibis Golf and Country Club (West Palm Beach, FL). During graduate school, he was a graduate teaching assistant at Auburn University while he obtained his master's degree in Entomology and Plant Pathology. His B.S. degree in Agronomy and Soils (emphasis in turfgrass management) also is from Auburn University.



Addison has a strong enthusiasm for the golf industry, and is eager to share his knowledge with the region. We welcome Addison to the staff and wish him a long and successful tenure with the Green Section.

[Visit the USGA Green Section Staff Contact Page](#)



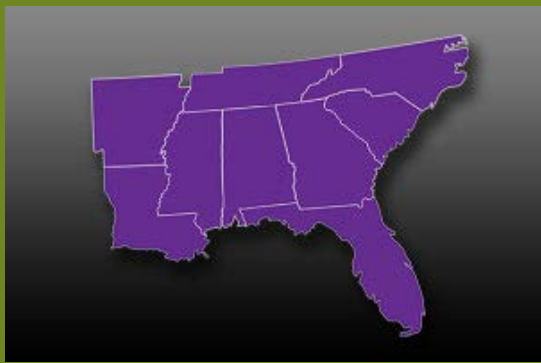


REGIONAL UPDATES

The USGA Green Section is divided into four regions staffed by agronomists who work with golf facilities on care of the golf course. USGA agronomists provide regular regional updates outlining current issues and observations from the field. Be sure to view updates from multiple regions as featured ideas, techniques and solutions to problems often apply to other parts of the country.



NORTHEAST REGION
Courses are struggling with a variety of challenges ranging from heavy snow and developing ice layers to eager winter golfers. Learning how to use social media outlets can improve your communication skills and keep golfers informed of current events. [Read More](#)



SOUTHEAST REGION
From leaf spot disease and traffic concerns to turfgrass colorants and educational conferences, the agronomists from the Southeast region highlight some common themes from recent travels in this week's regional update. [Read More](#)



WEST REGION
Golfers in the West are enjoying unusually warm conditions. However, a recent lack of rainfall and poor snow pack could translate into another year of drought in the southwest. Learn about evolving water best management practices and the management of arid-adapted landscape plants that may help your facility use less water in the future. [Read More](#)



CENTRAL REGION
Resource management goes beyond on-course operations. By upgrading to energy-efficient lighting and electrical appliances, long-term savings can be realized without sacrificing functionality and while consuming fewer resources. [Read More](#)

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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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