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Green Section Record

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Managing Organic Matter in Putting Greens

By Adam Moeller and Todd Lowe

Soft playing conditions, deep ball marks, inconsistent green speed and bumpy putting surfaces frustrate golfers and golf course superintendents.



If golfers and superintendents both want firm and smooth putting greens, why do some facilities struggle to achieve these conditions? Putting greens might be temporarily soft or inconsistent for many reasons, such as recent rainfall, but when there are chronic issues, the underlying problem is often excessive organic matter just beneath the putting surface. This article will assist golf course superintendents and the golf community by describing the most effective programs for managing organic matter in putting greens.

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Multimedia Content



Webcast: Weight Loss on Ignition

Concerned whether or not soil organic matter is affecting the turf health and playability of playing surfaces but not quite sure how to determine if your concerns are justified? Collecting soil samples and having them analyzed using the weight-loss-on-ignition method is one way to start. Here's how.

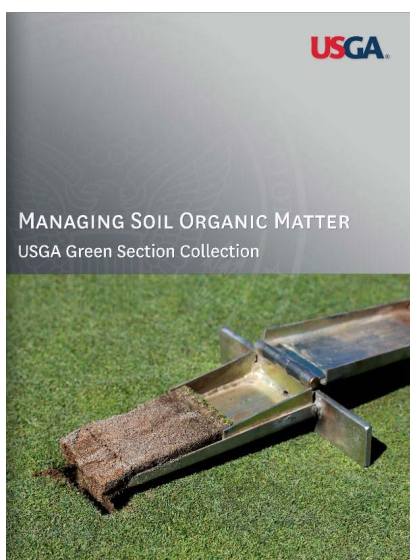
[Watch Now](#)


Video: Identifying Problem Greens

Have you ever noticed one or two greens that just don't seem to look or play the same as the others? Not all greens are created equal and several factors ultimately affect putting green performance. Learn what to look for if you're trying to troubleshoot a few problem greens; the issues may be surprisingly easy to address.

[Watch Now](#)

Green Section Collection: Managing Soil Organic Matter



These interactive digital collections include additional supporting articles, a photo gallery and videos that provide relevant information on the primary subject. The collections can be viewed online in a user-friendly digital magazine format, saved as a PDF or printed.

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Research You Should Know



Aging USGA Putting Greens

Part of the challenge of managing putting greens is adapting to changes in the root zone that occur as greens age. But what causes root zone characteristics to change and what effect do those changes have on putting green performance? Researchers at the University of Nebraska are addressing these questions.

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Fore The Golfer



Make More Birdies by Controlling Organic Matter

Does it seem like every time you play golf, the greens are covered in sand or aeration holes? Believe it or not, the superintendent is helping you make more birdies by causing these short-term disruptions in playing quality. Managing organic matter is the name of the game, and here's why it's important.

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Regional Updates



West Region

Having problems with waterfowl fouling up playing surfaces? Learn five ways golf courses are minimizing the damage caused by coots.

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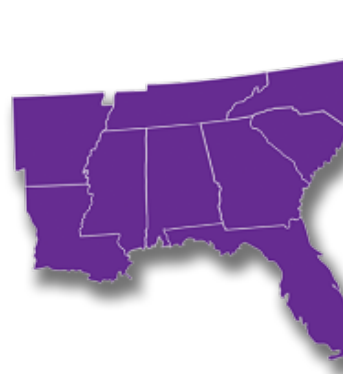

Northeast Region

Late-season warmth is a treat for golfers, but balancing fall projects with leaf cleanup, frost delays and staff reduction can be tricky.

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Central Region

Short days and cool nights have nearly shut down turf growth on fairways, but earthworm activity has increased, making some golfers feel like they are hitting more shots off mud than grass.

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Southeast Region

Mention fungi and people tend to cringe, especially golf course superintendents. However, not all fungi are bad; most aren't even pathogenic. These fungi can even help suppress turfgrass pathogens.

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