



THE NEWSLETTER

April 2011

of the **Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.**

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Fescue Management

by Michael Stachowicz

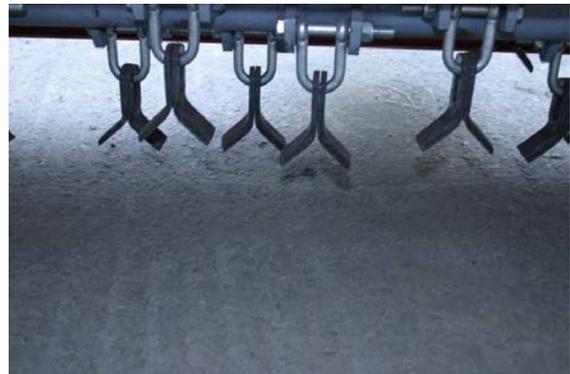
With spring almost in full swing it is time to gear up for another season of fescue management. Optimistically, we think this will be the year that the fescue will be thin enough, or weed free, or devoid of grub damage, but there always seems to be something that goes wrong. These naturalized areas actually seem to require more planning and management than regular roughs. What makes fescue demand so much attention is the fact that we have a short window to treat them before letting them naturalize in May. Other difficulties arise because we are mostly working to get an unnatural result from a naturalized area. A thin stand is a fairly unnatural state, only available under some unique conditions. This article will look at how to get a pure stand of fescue and how to manage the playability of the stand.



The ideal fescue stand made up of sheep, hard, and blue fescue with bare earth surrounding the plants.

The first step is cultural...how it gets mowed, watered, and fertilized. The best type of mower for stand thickness management is a flail mower. This type of mower allows for a closer cutting than a rotary. Most rotaries can only get a naturalized area down to about 6"-especially if you are using a brush hog. A flail allows a closer cut without damage to the mower, it can also be set in a way that it actually cuts

grooves in to the turf down to the soil. The ideal fescue patch has bare earth visible between the plants and if an impoverished soil with the right grasses is not available to provide us with that condition, we are going to have to do it mechanically.



Flail mower blades that can help thin the stand...we are looking for a verticutting type of effect on these areas.



An example of the thinning from the flail...even where it looks bare, there are enough fescue crowns to recover but this time it will be in a less dense state.

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Fescue Management - continued from page 1

Mowing should occur sometime in the fall until mid-May. If clippings are thick enough, they should be harvested in the fall while doing leaf removal. After that initial cleaning, leaving a reasonable amount of clippings on can actually be beneficial in thinning the stand and providing a mulch that inhibits weed germination.

The rule of thumb for mowing naturalized areas in the spring is to routinely mow (biweekly or monthly) the areas until the first seed head is visible. This is usually early to mid-May. At that point the process is to either stop mowing or mow one more time. The idea of this is that the plant at this time of year will stop putting energy into leaf growth and just put it into seedhead production. Sometimes this works perfectly and other times, especially during wet summers, there is very little seed-head production and more leaf production leading to that really thick condition that no golfer likes.

Other cultural approaches to fescue management are really non approaches. Irrigation should be eliminated as well as fertility. Irrigation and fertility not only promote excessive leaf growth, they can help favor other grasses (chewings fescue, creeping red fescue, bluegrass) at the expense of the sheep and hard fescues.

The second part of this is the chemical program. What follows has been designed to eliminate all grasses except for fescue and to eliminate all broadleaf weeds. In the spring, the first weed that needs control in our region is quackgrass. It starts growing first in the spring, spreads by rhizomes, and gets thick...not the ideal for these areas. It is very tough to control and will take two applications of a graminicide every spring for a few years to get control. The other option is a non-selective herbicide...which is not all that crazy of a thought as there are many courses that are experimenting with low rates of RoundUp on dormant fescues.



Quackgrass.



Graminicides will damage and kill little bluestem (unless it is dormant).

Graminicides are herbicides designed to kill grasses. This case calls for either Fusilade (fluazipop) or Segment (sethoxydim). These products at 17 oz per acre will kill all grasses except fescue...so be careful. Two applications will be required that are two weeks apart. A little nitrogen and methylated seed oil will help with uptake and are important to the success of these applications.

continued on page 4

President's Message

Greetings to everyone,

Spring has arrived as irrigation systems are being pressurized and sometimes re-pressurized, the abundance of debris has been cleaned up and the turf is responding to the sunny days we have had as we begin our first mowing of the season. The return of the staff, the smell of the fresh cut grass and projects being completed definitely get me excited for the season.

I recently attended the New England Golf Summit at Andover Country Club. I would like to congratulate Becky Blaiser from the MGA and all those involved for a well organized and extremely educational event. There were approximately 150 participants and the agenda was outstanding.

For those who don't know Glen Misiaszek, CGCS of Cohasset Golf Club is running in the Boston Marathon this year. Glen is raising money for Multiple Sclerosis, so please look for Glen and cheer him on.

The Scholarship and Benevolence tournament is soon approaching on May 23rd at Cohasset Golf Club. The Committee is still looking for donated rounds of golf for our raffle. Please email or call Sharon Brownell at 1-800-833-4451 or sbrownell@verizon.net. It is a wonderful opportunity to bring your club officials or guest to experience our association.

Our next monthly meeting will be at Norfolk Golf Club hosted by Superintendent Kevin Corvino on April 25th. There will be education with 1 pesticide credit and nine holes of golf with lunch.

Well that it's for now. Again, I wish all of you a great season and as many rainy Friday afternoons as possible.

Jason Adams
President, GCSANE

"A greenkeeper is the back bone of a club, a professional man, not a foreman, laborer or all around handy man on a golf course. He is deserving as the professional man, he should be granted reasonable wages and working hours. To those men who put in many extra working hours and not attending educational meetings, which will benefit themselves and their clubs, are failing to uphold the profession. He has no one to blame but himself and is doing an injustice to the advancement of greenkeeping."

January 1947 A.J. Sperandio



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GOLF fundraiser
TOURNAMENT

Fescue Management - continued from page 2

Another spring application that is needed is a pre-emergent for crabgrass, foxtail, and others. The names of these chemicals are well known such as Pendulum, Dimension, or Barricade. There are some who like to add Gallery to this mix...this tends to be very expensive and not as effective as one might hope. Two applications are preferred and should be spaced about two weeks apart. The first pre-emergent application can be timed with the second application of the graminicide.

The final application to the fescue areas should be sometime in mid-May having started early in the spring and applying three times at two week intervals. This application should have the second pre-emergent, bifenthrin (for ticks), broadleaf control, and a grub control. Treating these areas for ticks can be surprisingly successful and a good pr move with golfers. Grub control is entirely optional...I didn't for years, but as the fescue areas got better and better I felt compelled to protect them.

Broadleaf control can be the easiest part of this whole process if the right product(s) are chosen. Knowing precisely what your weed issues are is the key. The most wide spectrum application is one that includes triclopyr and 2,4-D ester...you can mix your own or use Crossbow. This does a great job on woody weeds, vines, the blackberry family (known as rubrus), and wild strawberries. While one might be tempted to mix a broadleaf herbicide with a graminicide, don't as it will render both products useless (there is some indication that Segment could be an exception to this rule, but I have no first hand knowledge of this). One application should be enough...don't forget the seed oil and soluble nitrogen.



The top half of the picture shows rubrus that has been controlled, the bottom shows where the sprayer missed.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Deertongue as one of the up and coming weeds. It starts out as a single bunch but then spreads. Herbicides will ding it up giving one hope, but it comes back. Roundup is the only option. This should be controlled early on before it gets out of control.

There are sure to be better ways to control weeds in fescues. In the past decade the number of herbicides has skyrocketed. They have gotten more effective, more precise, and use lower rates. Certainty, Dismiss, Tenacity and others may turn out to be more effective at particular weed control problems than what has been presented in this article.

Getting naturalized areas to perform well is a multi year effort, but substantial and noticeable changes in the look and performance of these areas is attainable very quickly. Most years will still require some hand spraying in August...no matter how well things are going. And even after years of implementing this program, weather still has the final say. The best years will be hot and dry, and the worst years will be wet.

In the end, naturalized grasses are important to the golf course and the local area's ecology. For the golf course it adds challenge, beauty, sunlight, and air circulation (vs. trees), and for the environment it provides a native habitat type that is vanishing in New England. ❖



Deertongue – a very difficult weed to control.

Thinking About It

By Don Hearn



Our business has lost a giant. Jack Petersen, former President of Tom Irwin, Inc., died in Florida at the end of February. He was one of the most wonderful people I ever met.

Jack had many sides to him – all good. He was a kind-hearted, good-spirited, caring, interesting, life-loving, supportive, large-living, encouraging and gentle person. He had a way about him that if a visitor from another planet

wanted to know how a good human being should act, Jack would be the template from which others would be cloned.

He was a generous supporter of all golf course superintendents and our professional associations. Whenever a donation or support for an event was requested Jack was one of the first to step forward and provide whatever was needed.

He treated all superintendents as if they were managing the “best” course in the country. It didn’t matter if you were from a small budget, single owner club or the superintendent of a well-known club with the largest budget in the country. He treated everyone the same – with respect and caring.

It was not unusual for Jack to stop in at a club wearing a suit and tie and tour the course regardless of the weather. I

remember when I got my start in the business seeing him come in from a tour of the course on a very rainy day. His suit was dripping wet (nah, no rain suit for Jack) and he walked into the maintenance building with a smile so wide he looked like he had found a pot of gold on the course. He made it seem like he had waited all year for the rain to be so heavy and he just couldn’t be happier looking at a problem on one of the greens. He was so happy to be sharing his knowledge with someone, regardless of the fact that he was soaked to the skin.

Jack loved the business and all the people in it. He respected them and always tried to do what was right. He wanted to see our profession and his business grow. He successfully witnessed both. And for that I’m lucky to have known him as my friend. Our profession was lucky to have him as a supporter.

Even though Jack is gone, his business continues to thrive under the leadership of his son, Chris, and a dedicated sales and support team that continues to serve golf course superintendents and other turf managers with the same dedication and support. ❖



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Send your *BEST* photos

I have added this photo section to the Newsletter to promote some laughter, a touch of embarrassment, of lot “What the heck was that person thinking?” and also some helpful tips to learn from. It will be published monthly, but that will be solely based on your participation. Include a brief description of the content in the photo, where it was taken and what you did to fix it. They can be of turf problems, equipment failures, operator errors, vandalism, and Mother Nature at her best or her worst. Please send your photos to jmartin101@gmail.com.

Jeff Berger, former assistant superintendent at Dedham Country and Polo Club. He did this while filling bunkers with a brand new material handler. This was seven years ago, the Dakota was repaired and has been in service since then. ❖



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The Putting Green Performance Pyramid

A framework for putting green performance.

By Chris Hartwiger, U.S.G.A

Inevitably, the comparison of putting green conditions between rival clubs is a topic of conversation on many USGA Turfgrass Advisory Service visits. Clearly explaining why the putting greens perform, or don't perform, at a golf course is not an easy conversation between an agronomist and a course official. The course official is searching for the one thing that makes a difference, while the agronomist must respectfully explain that there are many factors that contribute to the performance of a putting green. Over the past year, the Southeast Region has started using a new method to help explain putting green performance that seems to resonate with both course officials and superintendents. We call it the Putting Green Performance Pyramid, shown graphically in Figure 1. Take a moment to study it and then return to reading the article.

THE COMPONENTS — THE BASE

A pyramid is strong because it has a wide base. The higher a pyramid extends, the wider the base must be. For putting greens, the base is composed of numerous factors, including (in no particular order):

- Sunlight and air movement
- Water quality
- Soil nutrient status
- Disease control
- Soil-borne pests
- Irrigation (watering practices and system issues)
- Organic matter
- Core aeration with topdressing to fill holes
- Sand topdressing (quantity, quality, and frequency)
- Mowing practices
- Winter management strategies (bermudagrass putting greens)
- Summer survival strategies (bentgrass)
- Construction issues (rootzone quality, drainage issues, etc.)
- Size vs. traffic considerations
- Presence of undesirable species (*Poa annua*)
- Correct turf species per expectations
- Design issues (limited cupping area)
- Skill of the crew

When evaluating the performance of a set of putting greens, it is necessary to consider each of these factors. For putting greens to succeed year in and year out, all these considerations should be solid. If one or more are lacking, there are issues in the foundation of the pyramid that might limit the level to which the putting greens can be managed. Identifying these weak "bricks" in the base is an opportunity for the course to strengthen them.

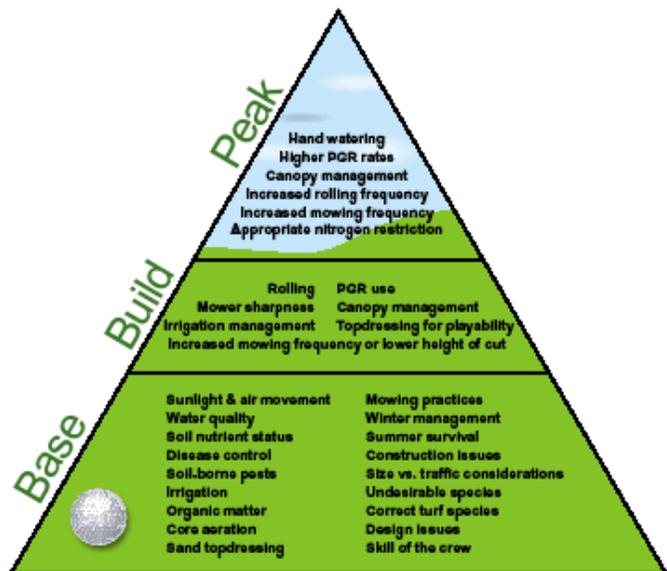


Figure 1: The Putting Green Performance Pyramid



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BUILD PERIOD

The term *build period* is used as it represents a focus on surface management practices designed to get the putting greens ready for a playing season. Once again, the broader the base, the higher the build period can be. In practical terms, this means that the putting greens can be elevated to a higher standard for a longer time because the core agronomic practices have produced a healthy base of turf.

Practices in the build period include:

- Rolling
- Plant growth regulator (PGR) use
- Mower sharpness (ability to maintain maximum mower sharpness)
- Canopy management (light vertical mowing, brushing, etc.)
- Irrigation management (emphasis on playability)
- Topdressing for playability improvements
- Increased mowing frequency or lower height of cut

PEAK PERIOD

This period refers to the highest point of the pyramid. Sometimes it is desirable or necessary to peak the putting greens for short durations for key events on the calendar. The peak period might last 7 to 14 days and is a condition not considered to be either economically or environmentally sustainable. Many golfers at home do not realize that the putting greens they see on TV each week are in a peak period,



Above: Finishing touches, such as rolling to improve smoothness and green speed, are representative of the pinnacle of the Pyramid.

continued on page 9



Above: The mowing program, including frequency, mower setup, and mower sharpness, has a role in all three levels of the Putting Green Performance Pyramid.



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Putting Green Performance - continued from page 8

while the putting greens at their home course may be in the build or even base period. When they see putting greens at their peak week in and week out, they may come to think that's how all putting greens should play. Not true! Practices in the peak period include:

- Hand watering to maximize playability and consistency
- Higher PGR rates
- Canopy management (more frequent)
- Increased rolling frequency
- Increased mowing frequency
- Appropriate nitrogen restriction

CONCLUSION

It is our intention that this article sparks conversation in your maintenance facility and clubhouse. We hope this framework may help you explain why your putting greens perform the way they do. The practices listed under base, build and peak periods are not intended to be all-inclusive. If we have left anything out, feel free to email us and we will improve the pyramid. We would love to hear from you. ❖

CHRIS HARTWIGER (chartwiger@usga.org) is a senior agronomist in the Green Section's Southeast Region.

**Source: *Green Section Record* Vol. 48 (27)
December 17, 2010 Page 2**



Sometimes golfers are puzzled why their putting greens never reach a high peak during the year or why the peak period is short. Reviewing basic factors such as sunlight levels will help them to understand why the peak will never be high.

BORDEN LAUNCHES NEW PRODUCT

The Borden Company has been very active as well this year. In our 49 years of providing quality lime applications to over 300 golf facilities we are expanding our product line to include a native, white bunker sand. We have access to a sand source that is local to Massachusetts, falls within the USGA sieve recommendations, and has a color similar to silica sand.

This white angular sand is available in 4 different consistencies - All figures are % Retained (Cumulative):

Sieve	Washed Sand*	C-33*	Bunkerwhite*	Bunkerwhite-Processed*
16 Mesh	13.9	14.1	11.1	11.1
20 Mesh	34	37.2	32.3	32.3
30 Mesh	56.1	60.1	54.6	54.6
40 Mesh	75.5	78.9	73.3	73.3
50 Mesh	88.6	90.7	86.2	86.2
70 Mesh	95.3	96.7	93.9	93.9
100 Mesh	97.7	98.6	97.1	97.1
140 Mesh	98.5	99.1	98.2	98.2
200 Mesh	98.9	99.3	98.8	98.8
-200 Mesh	1.1	0.7	1.2	1.2

We at The Borden Company have reached out to Paul Miller, CGCS, a forty-year retired golf course superintendent, to help us evaluate this new product. Paul was immediately impressed with the angular distribution of the particles and was quick to point out that all four samples fell in the low to high 90's cumulative in the 16 (1mm) to 60 (.25mm) mesh sieve range. We are presently looking for interested golf facilities to investigate and try this product. According to Paul, it is difficult to evaluate from a sample of how the sand will perform until actually in a bunker. However, to quote Paul, "the particle shape and with better than 70% of the product in the 40 mesh range I would find it hard to believe that there would be many embedded (plugged) lies."

The Borden Company is excited about this new product and look forward to continuing to serve the golf course industry. We would be happy to send samples of the sands to prospective customers and interested parties.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome New Members:

- Charles Dickson, Assistant Superintendent Belmont CC, Belmont MA
- James Leahy, Assistant, Cohasset GC, Scituate, MA
- Maltby and Company, Friend, Stoughton MA

Our condolences are extended to The Garrity family on the recent passing of Robert Garrity at the age 60, after a courageous battle with Multiple Myeloma. Robert was the Assistant Superintendent at Gannon Golf Course in Lynn for the past 13 years.

Our condolences are extended to Andrew Langlois and family on the passing of Andrew's father, Gaston Langlois, on March 23, 2011.

Congratulations to Thomas Ackley, CGCS GCSAA certified golf course superintendent at Juniper Hill Golf Course who has re-certified for the third time in April 2010.

As in the past, *The Newsletter* continues to invite Affiliate members to submit a press release about new personnel, new products or a company bio. We will print each and every release free of charge. This is a great way to advertise for free.

The Toro Company announced their "Partners in Excellence" awards at the recent GCSAA show in Orlando, FL. Turf Products was awarded in three different categories:

Irrigation Distributor of the Year

The Toro Company has awarded its prestigious "Irrigation Distributor of the Year" award to Turf Products, LLC of Enfield, Ct. This award is given to only one Toro distributor each year based on meeting specific standards outlined in Toro's "Partners in Excellence" program. Turf Products Irrigation Division services golf courses from Westchester

County, NY to Maine. TPC is celebrating 41 years in the turf industry.

Toro's "Green Blazer" Award

Nat Binns, of Turf Products, LLC has received the Toro Company's "Green Blazer" award. This award recognizes the top commercial salesmen in the United States. Mr. Binns is the sales representative servicing the greater Boston marketplace for Turf Products. Please join us in congratulating Nat on this outstanding achievement and national recognition!

Irrigation Serviceperson of the Year

Paxton Mallard has been awarded Toro's top honor for outstanding customer service – "Serviceperson of the Year". Paxton is the lead service technician for Turf Products LLC, of Enfield, Ct. servicing golf course irrigation systems. Paxton's technical expertise and outstanding work ethic were just two of the key factors that earned him this coveted award. Please join us in congratulating Paxton!

CALENDAR

April 25:

GCSANE Monthly Meeting

Norfolk Golf Club

Host: Kevin Corvino, CGCS

May 9:

GCSANE Monthly Meeting-Bear Cup Tournament Joint Meeting with GCSACC

LeBaron Hills Country Club

Host: Mark Klimm

June 13:

GCSANE Monthly Meeting

Presidents Golf Course

Host: Jim Fitzroy, CGCS and Carl Miner



GCSANE Offers Website Banner advertising at www.gcsane.org

The price is \$500 for one year which will be re-occurring annually from your first billing unless otherwise specified.

For more information, please contact Jeff Urquhart at 781-828-2953 or jmartin101@gmail.com

Let's Go Back To -1940-

A monthly addition by the Editor

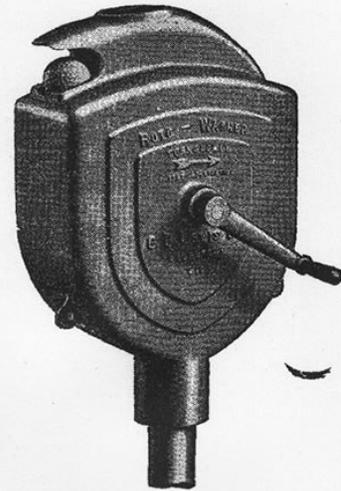
Plan ahead with LEWIS TEE EQUIPMENT



Multi-Ball Roto Washer →

Just feed dirty golf balls into the opening—turn the crank—and out they pop—clean, sparkling and white. Unique construction eliminates troublesome gears. The long-wearing circular brush has an aluminum back to prevent warping and a constant pressure is kept against the ball by a coil spring. A drain plug at the bottom of the aluminum case facilitates cleaning.

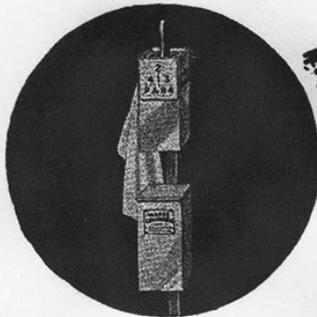
Roto-washers, each.....\$15.00
4½ ft. post for mounting, each.. 1.25



← Paddle Type Washer

This is the inexpensive washer that does such a good job of cleaning—has such an exceptionally long life—is easily kept clean. Just pull up the paddle—insert the ball—and with a few easy strokes the ball is clean. The patented slot (shown in the phantom view to the left) does the job. Brushes have equalizing spring on back to compensate for wear, and can be easily and inexpensively replaced. Washer is finished with two coats of durable white enamel.

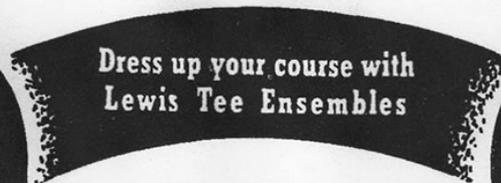
Paddle-Type Washers, 1 to 10, ea...\$6.00
11 or more, ea..... 5.50
(price is washer alone)



Regular Tee Ensemble

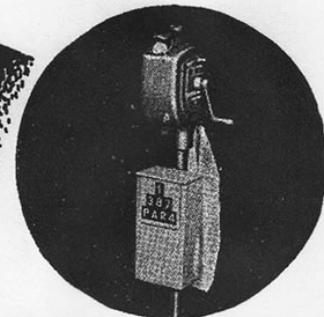
This includes the Paddle-Type Washer, Tee Stake, Tee Data Plate, Waste Container, Towel and Towel Ring. It is a complete unit for the tee. Items may be purchased separately if desired.

Regular Tee Ensemble,
each.....\$10.50



Bag Rack

Lewis Racks are a necessity on the well-groomed course. This sturdy rack is made of a scalloped aluminum casting set—screwed to a 54" long galvanized post. Complete, each \$4.75



Roto Tee Ensemble

This unit is made up of the Multi-Ball Roto Washer, Tee Stake and Towel Ring, and a Waste Container with Tee Data Plate—all conveniently mounted on a permanently installed post. Items may be purchased separately if desired.

Roto Tee Ensemble,
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