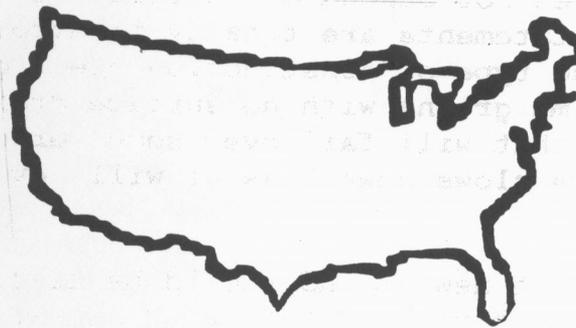


TurfComms

V. 14, I.5



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PURPOSE: To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

TEXAS TURFGRASS CONF. Continued: On Wednesday there were two talks on computer use for putting green evaluations. The second, I've reported on before: the use of technology to decide which trees need to be removed so that the proper amount of sunlight can get to the putting surface (or **Shade Removal**). The first, was a method to **evaluate the hole locations on putting greens**. Essentially, it measures the slope on the greens in miniscule detail and maps out the areas on the green by the percent slope or percent difficulty. This cost about \$1500/green but might be useful in convincing the Board as to why the putting surface needs to be rebuilt, such as when there is too much slope for 10 foot green speeds. This is a very real problem on southern golf courses with undulating greens designed for slow putting speeds.

TOPDRESSING FAIRWAYS: Larry Gilhuly wrote about this recently in the Green Section Record. He gave the talk and I suggest you read the article, [A Decade of Piling It On](#), Nov./Dec. 1999 **USGA Record**. Some points he made were that it was first recommended in Piper and Oakley's book for clayey soils. In Dr. Beard's 1982 text, it is mentioned as being too costly for what is accomplished. Apparently, for the long rainy season in the Northwest it is quite easy to justify.

Drainage must be taken care of first. Don't use drop spreaders. He urged use of the big cyclone type including Tycrop MH-400 and the like. If making a mistake on sand make

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it on the coarse side. Be sure silt and clay are first washed out of sand; you'll get enough of those coming up with the earthworms and aerification. Like for greens, apply sand light and frequently to avoid layers. Don't stop but you can slow down when aerification brings up only sand.

Need to do green surrounds and maybe roughs. In the Northwest for cart use it was found necessary to do the area between fairway and cart path. Sand topdressing does reduce the problem of earthworm casts. It seems that to earthworms sand is just like jalapeno peppers are to us damn Yankees. It irritates like heck all the way through and thus they move on out to areas where it ain't. Us Yankees with sensitive gullets learn real quick to avoid the jalapenos.

Sand topdressing of fairways in the Northeast has allowed them to mow in the rainy season as well as play golf with carts. On the down side in addition to the sand expense is the need for extra mowers and reels, or more frequent replacement. You also will find you must raise the irrigation heads. For a superintendent's view read, Improving Your Fairways with Topdressing, by Jonathan S. Jennings, CGCS, Sept. 2002 **GCM**.

Dr. David Chalmers gave a good review talk on **bentgrass management**. One rule he stressed was the removal of 20% of the thatch layer each year. *Ed. That amounts to two aerifications with 1 inch hollow tines on 2 inch centers or 31 aerifications with 1/4 inch hollow tines on two inch centers. I assume your choice will be somewhere inbetween. A good reason to think about one inch centers also.* He also talked about use of the 'Graden' Verticut as a "linear aerifier". This he claimed has become very popular in the Mid-Atlantic going 1 and 1/2 inches deep with 2mm thick blades. The thicker blades do too much damage. For you older folks this is the Mataway with thinner blades.

Dr. Richard White gave a talk on **Bermudagrass decline**, caused by Gaeuimannomyces graminis var. graminis (sp). He noted that Champion was very susceptible, Diamond zoysia very resistant, Baby and Tifdwarf resistant, Miniverde and Tifeagle susceptible. The disease is encouraged by pH above 7.0, close mowing, nutrient deficiency, shade, excess or inadequate water, excessive wear and excessive thatch. Florida has done a lot of the work on this disease. Dr. White decided to take a closer look at bermudagrass growth in hopes of better understanding the disease.

He found that at 40% of full sunlight Tifdwarf puts out more stolons at 80 F degree days and 61 F degree nights than it does at the warmer 95 F days and 80 F nights. Tifeagle behaves in a similar manner. Leaf length and internode length are shorter at high day and night temperatures. But, the interval to the next leaf and axillary bud appearance is quicker. A nitrogen increase from 4 to 8 or 12 lb/M does increase the rate of leaf development. Heat slows lateral growth, therefore; use smaller tines for aerification in the heat of summer and use the large tines in the cooler weather of late spring and end of summer.

He found that for Floradwarf higher nitrogen (14 lb/M) helped the grass outgrow the pathogen. Non-acidifying fertilizers result in a little faster leaf development than acidifying fertilizers. But, the latter may lower pH and thus reduce pathogen activity. There has not been great success controlling this disease with fungicides.

He felt that light frequent vertical mowing may aggravate the problem. He also found that solid tines were better than hollow tines when aerifying infected turf. The latter tore the turf up too much. High nitrogen (24 lb./M) and heavy topdressing produced the best quality in infected grass. Heavy topdressing may encourage longer stolons due to shade? In summary, no magic cure but some management tips that may help you live with the disease.

At the end of the program were Bud White and Larry Gilhuly with **Field Observations**. Bud is the new Southern Mid-Continent Agronomist for the Green Section. Bud said he had found that poor water can be a real factor when thatch builds up. Ed. Welcome to the West. He felt the new bermudagrass cultivars were being released with misinformation when they are stated as only needing 1 or 2 aerifications/year. This ain't enough!!!

He pointed out that **black layer** was often due to too much thatch buildup. He urged superintendents to go to 1x1 spacing on their aerification. He said it gives 3 times more holes and heals just as fast. Also putting after maybe better than with the old 2 inch spacing. He noted that bentgrass responds better to the use of **Graden** machine than **bermudagrass** does. With this machine, cleanup works best if you 1) blow off in the direction of the grooves. 2) topdress and brush in up and down the grooves and 3) follow with a second topdressing.

He urged those with bermudagrass greens to use the out-front brushes on greens mowers daily to control grain. He also felt that with the new bermudagrass cultivars you need to topdress weekly and verticut only every 2 to 3 weeks.

He mentioned that dyeing(ED, coloring/painting) greens was back in as an alternative to overseeding bermudagrass. There are new dyes that hold up better although, apparently, you have to apply the materials monthly. He also mentioned that if you have a lot of winter wear you will need to overseed, not dye.

Larry Gilhuly mentioned one thing I thought might be of interest and that is that **shaded greens** or sections of greens that are heavily shaded do not need as much **topdressing**. Or in other words because they have less growth they have less need.

End of TX Conf. Notes

TRANXIT GTA HERBICIDE: From Golfdom, Dec. 2002 – EPA has approved TranXit for use on bermudagrass greens.

ROUNDUP READY: From Golfdom, Dec. 2002 – a Roundup-tolerant hard fescue has been released by Pure Seed Testing. It is called Aurora Gold. I wonder when it is used in naturalized roughs, how many other fescues it can cross breed with?

TOXIC CHEMICALS: This is from World-Watch, Jan./Feb. 2003 issue, pg. 39. Kilograms of toxic chemicals that would be removed from the environment each year if U.S. homeowners reduced their use of pesticides by 10 percent ----- 2 million.

Kilograms of toxic chemicals that would be removed from the environment each year if U.S. manufacturing firms reduced their releases by 10 percent ----- 700 million.

I think the EPA is spending too much time and effort giving the turf industry a hard time about polluting the environment!

AN AUSTRALIAN RESPONDS TO ROUNDUP READY BENTGRASS

ARTICLE: David Nickson emailed me the following: "Just read your latest messages from the sage and suggest you check, "Seeds of Concern" by David R Murray, published here by the University of New South Wales Press in Sydney. www.unswpress.com.au

Glad to hear that they have dropped the bentgrass for the time being at least. Browntop bentgrass is one of the biggest weeds in the area known as Gippsland here in Victoria and this dramatically reduces the carrying capacity of pastures for both beef and dairy cattle. The idea of releasing another bent variety that is resistant to Roundup would go over like a lead balloon. This process would almost certainly speed up the problem of resistant weed species within the bent plants sprayed and this has already happened in South Australia where several ryegrass types have shown resistance to Roundup after relatively few applications,..."

WOMEN PLAYING THE PGA TOUR???: This appears to be something that will happen in the year 2003. I wish the women luck. But, from what I saw watching the Women's USGA Open at Cedar Ridge in Tulsa back in the 1980s there aren't many that would make it through Tour Qualifying on a good day. Annika Sorenstam may well be one of those that could. It will be interesting to see, but that is not where my money will go.

HYBRID: Bought me a **Honda Civic Hybrid**. That is one of those new breed of cars on the market that combines in this case both a gasoline and an electric motor. I was looking for a towable, 4 wheels down-sedan and had narrowed it between a Honda and a Saturn. The Saturn was much less expensive but it was noisier and the repair record was not as good on them, compared to Honda. Buying the **Hybrid** was kind of an after thought but I said why not, gas prices seem to be on the way up (Jan. 31st was the purchase date). And if I'm going to preach conservation I need to practice it. It also compensates some for my 10 mi./gallon motorhome.

END