

## We Don't Have a Big Weed Problem!

*Editor's note: When I called Dave Portz to ask him about his weed control programs, he suggested that I might want to talk to someone else, because he didn't feel he really had a severe problem that would lend itself to an article about problem solving. I didn't let Dave off the hook! I asked him what he did that he felt kept his weed problems to a minimum.*

I wasn't boasting when Joel called, but we haven't had a large scale weed infestation of any kind that required a far reaching herbicide program. We do have skirmishes with recurring dollarweed in the St. Augustine turf at the club. We apply light rates of Trimec or Threeway for suppression. We also apply Gallery in the Fall and atrazine in the Spring.

On the course, we do spot spray sedge on the green and tee slopes and some broadleaf weeds in the bare areas on the margins of the roughs. We have not used a preemergent herbicide in five years. We are in environmentally sensitive coastal marsh setting so we try to grow healthy turf to keep weed pressure to a minimum.

In the growing season we verticut greens bi-weekly. The tees are done monthly and the fairways three times each year. We aerify everything twice per year. The GA-60 has done a real good job for us on the fairways.

Our fertilizer program for the bermuda greens is no more than .5 pounds of nitrogen per month. I like to use a 1:2 ratio of nitrogen to potassium with additional straight potassium applications to supplement. Between granular applications, I use light liquid feedings with 12-0-8.

On our overseeding I make one granular nitrogen application of slow release 39-0-0. The rest of the winter I use liquid spray feedings alternating Iron, a root stimulator, and Agriplex without nitrogen every three weeks. I do apply a granular 0-0-28 at .25 - .5 pounds per 1,000 square feet every month.

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## Is the daily demand for tournament conditions driving the entire golf industry into the ground?

BY MIKE BAILEY

There is a growing concern and possible controversy over the integrity of the bermudagrasses being used on our golf courses today. Turfgrasses being sold under old established names are beginning to show a wide disparity in reacting to similar modern maintenance programs. One course's healthy, tight, emerald green putting surfaces are another course's weak and struggling greens. All are built on USGA spec greens and all managed by competent professionals. What's going on? Is someone guilty of wrong doing?

Reflect back to the 1960s and analyze where the game of golf was at that time. Golfer demands and media pressure had not evolved into the pressure of today's demands. What type of hybrid bermudagrasses must have been available then?

The truth is there were not any hybrids in use then. The science of bermudagrass turf research was somewhat simple. Someone had this magical little spot of turf somewhere on his golf course. The "greenskeeper" would cultivate this "jewel plot" as being something better than the rest.

Maybe, he thought, this spot could be the grass of the future. That is exactly how modern bermudagrass evolved. Hence the names of these pocketed areas of the then "grass of the future" typically bore

the name of their geographic location. Ormond bermudagrass, as it became internationally known and planted successfully throughout the world, evolved from the lawn surrounding the Ormond Beach Hotel in Ormond Beach, Fla.

Dr. Glenn Burton, the father of bermudagrass research, and his staff collected samples from these "jewel plots" and took them to the Coastal Agricultural Research Station in Tifton, Georgia for testing. They successfully founded bermudagrass technology that stands even today. Tiftway 419 bermuda was virtually created by Dr. Burton through radiation exposure that altered the original parent plant, and created a genetic change that created the hybrid as it is known today. It took many years of research to select from the many samples created to find a grass that would be considered the most acceptable turf for a golf course.

Dr. Burton has stated, "We did not design these grasses to ever consider they would be mowed so low as to what today's standards are." I distinctly remember attending more than one Tifton Turfgrass Conference the week following the Masters in the 1970s, believing we were pushing our grasses near the edge of survivability at mowing heights of 5/32 of an inch.

Now, many do not consider that ac-