

# Viewpoint

## Kill it or keep it?

There is a war being fought today by many of the golf course superintendents of our nation. It is a war that has gone on, for many, seemingly forever. It is a war that has aroused almost as much controversy as the attempted recall of Cleveland's mayor. It is a war against a foe that is much dreaded by some, while treated with nothing worse than benign neglect by others.

By now you probably know: it is the great war against the fearful grass *Poa annua*, commonly called annual bluegrass.

As far as we can see, the most certain thing about *Poa annua* is that golf course superintendents can't agree whether it's good or bad for golf courses. It's true that the grass turns brown in hot, dry weather, that it "takes over" from other more desirable grasses and then dies out, leaving large brown patches. But it's also true that you can mow it short and, if you maintain it properly, it looks good — especially when combined with bentgrass. Also, the ball sits up on it nicely.

The question about *Poa annua* remains: "Is it better to fight it or live with it — to kill it or keep it?"

Is it better, as Cincinnati Country Club Superintendent James Glazer recently told *The Wall Street Journal*, to do "anything to get rid of *Poa* for 10 or 20 years"? Or should superintendents follow the advice outlined by Glen View Club Superintendent Bruce Sering in a recent *Verdure Newsletter*: "Some say, 'Kill the *Poa* and live only with the bent.' Some say, 'Kill everything and start over again with a new, improved miracle turf.' I've found that most of these improvements turn out to be a miracle pain in the grass. I say, 'Budget to live with the *Poa*.' I believe it is less expensive in the long run to live with *Poa annua* and bent . . . that living with the *Poa* and bent does not interfere with play the way a changeover program would."

There has been much more written about *Poa Annua*, but most of it has been from a technical, research point of view.

GOLF BUSINESS would like to get your opinion. Please use the "reader forum card" bound into the magazine facing this page. Just write "kill it" or "keep it" on the card, supply the information requested at the bottom, and mail it — postage is prepaid. If you want to tell us your reasons, or if you want to tell us about a particular program or method that has worked for you in regard to *Poa annua*, just write that on the card as well. If you need more room, please use a separate sheet of paper and mail it to me at 9800 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44102.

The best answers will be printed in GOLF



BUSINESS in a future issue, along with a count of the "kill it" and "keep it" votes.

We may not find a definitive answer to the problem, but something someone else is doing may help you find your own solution.

**David J. Slaybaugh**  
Editor

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