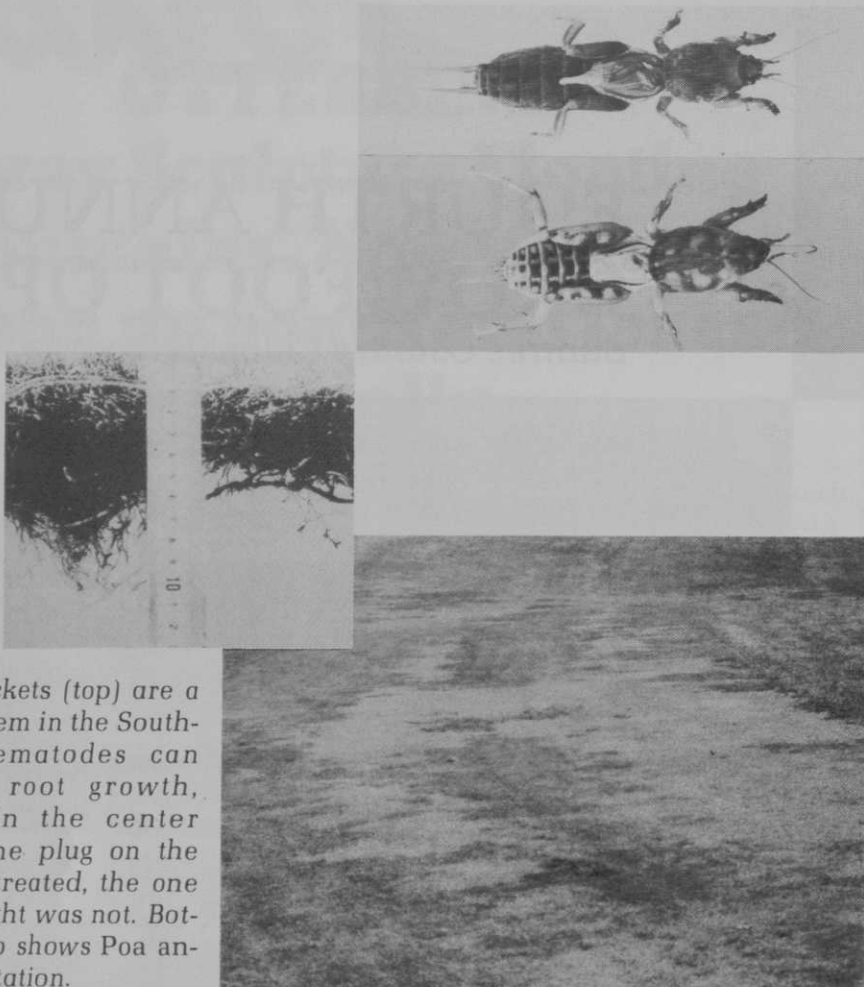


USGA report: Southeastern Region

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Mole crickets (top) are a big problem in the Southeast. Nematodes can restrict root growth, shown in the center photo. The plug on the left was treated, the one on the right was not. Bottom photo shows *Poa annua* infestation.

The past year has been a most interesting one for golf course turf in the Southeast. Unfortunately, we have encountered a wide spectrum of problems, many of which have no simple solutions. Florida and coastline courses are coping with reduced water quality, increasing nematode and mole cricket populations. The Piedmont regions are constantly battling *Poa annua* and other weeds while the mountain courses wrestle with resistant strains of disease, *Poa annua* infestations and winter kill of bermudagrass.

One problem is shared by the entire Southeast however, and that is severe traffic! As the Southeast becomes more heavily populated each year, our golf course superintendents get further behind in the traffic war. With this in mind, let me make a plea to all golfers to please do their part in reducing wear. Keep golf carts on the paths as much as possible, and please do not follow the same routes on and off tees and greens. Worn areas have to be dealt with by all.

As I see it, golf course superinten-

dents face two major problems in the future — reduced water availability and severe restrictions on pesticide usage. The water limitations will require very careful water management, the use of effluent, and the development of turfgrasses with greater drought tolerances. Many courses in Florida and along the coast face heavy salt intrusion into their irrigation water. The salinity is not always correctable, but there are procedures one can take to reduce its detrimental effects.

Aeration with small tines and leaving the holes open help to move the salt through the rootzone by permitting greater water infiltration. The application of gypsum after aeration is beneficial in breaking up the salt radical and changing the salt molecules into a form which is more readily leached through the soil. When watering with salty water (usually 600 ppm or more), a different water management program must be initiated. One must apply more water than normal to keep the salt moving downward. Reduced amounts of water are moved

upward by capillary action which maintains a salty condition in the rootzone. This in turn causes reduced plant vigor.

The second significant problem of the future is the restrictions on pesticide materials. Already, courses in sandy regions are fighting mole crickets and nematodes with less effective materials. Concentrated efforts must be made to discover new products to better control these troublesome pests. The same is true with many diseases in the higher altitude areas of our region. Last year several courses encountered losses of grass due to fungicide-resistant diseases. This problem challenges the superintendent to be an effective chemical manager and maintain constant material rotations to prevent chemical resistance.

Better grooming of greens is another area to consider. Golf course greens are the primary playing areas on a course and, while only comprising about 2 percent of the entire course, account for one-half of the total strokes of a par round of golf. This fact, in my opinion, makes concentrated green management essential.

Grooming involves proper mowing operations obviously, but it also involves light and frequent vertical mowings and topdressings. These procedures can be done on a weekly basis in the spring and fall for bentgrass and the spring, summer and winter for overseeded bermudagrass greens.

The word "light" should be reemphasized so the vertical mowings and topdressings do not disrupt uniformity. Very light grooving encourages an upright growth habit thus minimizing grain. Follow-up with light topdressings smooths the surface and increases putting speed. These procedures are only effective when applied to a total grooming program of frequent mowing and brushing.

It goes without saying that mowing should always be done with sharp, well-adjusted mowers and brushing, like vertical mowing, only done during periods of active growth.

The golf course superintendents' profession requires as much dedication, concern, desire and hard work as any profession in our society. Superintendents deserve all the praise golfers can give them.