

# Dealing With Type 1 Fairy Rings

By Jack MacKenzie CGCS  
North Oaks Golf Club

"We've got a problem," I told my green committee at our August 4 monthly meeting. "Type 1 Fairy Rings are running rampant upon several of our fairways and we must take proactive action to limit their impact both upon playability of the fairways and aesthetically."

Unlike other courses, the Fairy Rings we have are not the limp-wristed Type 2 green circles of over stimulated green turf with no visible fruiting bodies. Nor are they the mild mannered Type 3 Fairy Rings, one or several fungi in the Basidiomycete family that is evident by a ring of fruiting bodies and no green grass. The Fairy Rings that appear every several years are the Type 1, 'kick butt and leave no survivors' elongated or concentric rings of dead grass that seemingly appear over night.

In 2005, we encountered many Type 1



Type 1 Fairy Ring at North Oaks Golf Club

Fairy Rings; after a summer of several 90 degree plus weeks and a fair amount of precipitation, both are ingredients necessary for the rapid development of fairy rings. At the time we aerified and used wetting solutions in an attempt to limit

the unsightly pathogen as well as additional fertilizer and Prostar fungicide. Unfortunately I am not a very patient individual when it comes to turf recovery, so rather than wait for the anticipated response, my staff and I took the problem into our own hands, quite literally, so as we soon found ourselves armed with shovels with a mission to dig out the pests.

The mass of mycelium we uncovered was incredible, and smell only tolerable! From the strip of the dead fairway turf down to about one foot below the surface we found an ever tapering 'root' of white cottony fungus; pretty cool to look at, but very apparently the source of our challenges. The staff excavated the soil six inches beyond the infection, back-filled with clean soil and sodded with bent

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Fairy Ring Puff Balls

## Type 1 Fairy Rings -

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grass from our nursery. The excised material was buried deep in a dump where nobody will be tempted to reuse the soil.

The project, though intense, was a huge success. No longer did I have to look at the blemishes; the

source of infection had been removed permanently and it didn't take a whole lot of time. For the next several years we were 'ring free' as conditions didn't activate a serious blow up of Fairy Ring.



2010

Dry then wet then dry then wet, oh yeah, throw in attempting to water deep and infrequently. Top it off with a wee bit of warm weather and tada... Type 1 Fairy Ring. Big time. Just like 2005 but in different areas. However, the sections we excised and rebuilt in 2005 didn't express any symptoms of the dreaded disease. With this in mind we once again hit the dreaded rings hard.

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To reiterate our procedure: the first step involved removing a strip of damaged turf using a sod cutter. A deep 'grave' was then dug, removing the diseased soil to be hauled away never to be seen again. We back-filled the trough with clean soil, tamping in layers to limit any settling. Finally we sodded with bent grass from our nursery.

Over the years I have attended many educational sessions describing Fairy Rings and have always left feeling defeated as the chemical control methods were limited, expensive and very temporary. The speakers also rarely touched upon the removal of the 'rings' as a potential option for control. By taking the problem to hand, the Green Staff at North Oaks Golf Club eliminated the blemishes, providing the players with a playable surface and providing me with a once again blemish free fairway.

Happy membership, happy Super, happy crew!

## Thank You to All Volunteers Who Made the 3M Championship a Huge Success at TPC!



Tournament volunteers, from the left, James Gleason (TPC Sugarloaf), Mark Michalski (U of M - Crookston), Jon Michalski, Adam Roels (TPC Deere Run), Luke Dant (Sygenta), and Kevin Gruber (Edina CC). Not Pictured: Ashlee Moren, Mike Motschenbacher (Majestic Oaks GC), Jon Harguth, Dalton Lingbeck (Edina CC), Ben Arvidson (Edina CC), Bob Knowles, and George

## ELGA: IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU?

It's the end of August and now is the time for GCSAA members to start thinking about the Environmental Leaders in Golf Award (ELGA) program and what it can mean to them. There are many answers to that question and I'm aware that not everyone has an interest in participating in this program. What I can tell you is about my experiences and what my club's participation has meant to us and personally to me.

First of all, if you are a golf course superintendent and you are not aware of the impact the environmental movement has had on our profession over the last 20 years, you are either brain dead or you just don't care. Either way, you are not headed for a long career in golf course management. Some are more engaged in the environmental aspects of our profession than others, but we are all aware of the expectations that the public and players have regarding the responsibility we have to manage our course in a way that minimizes negative environmental impacts. GCSAA members, as a collective group, are some of the most progressive professionals when it comes to knowledge about and commitment to the environment. One of the ways you can receive recognition for your efforts and the efforts of your course is to utilize programs like ELGA. This program requires some initial work but it is relatively easy to do if you have the time. Many times I have spoken with other superintendents who say they just don't have the time. I understand we all have increasing demands on our time, but I have some ideas that may make the process less time consuming.

### There are six different components to the ELGA application.

They are Course Description, Education and Outreach, IPM, Resource Conservation, Water Management and Wildlife Preservation. Seems daunting to write a few hundred words about what you do on your course regarding each of these components but in reality it just takes time to gather information and organize it. How much time you ask? That would vary depending on the course, but I would say that if you spent 30 minutes each day for a week devoted to completing these components you could easily complete it in a week or less. Why not involve some of your key staff? Many times we employ people with an interest in the outdoors and hidden talents for writing. What better experience for an Assistant or other key staff member than to be given some of the responsibility? I believe in utilizing the talents of those around you for their benefit and yours. I have utilized the talents of a Horticulturist, First Assistant, Second Assistant, Irrigation Tech and others to help with the initial application.

**Here is the best tip.** When you are ready to complete the components, use a separate Word document for each one. Then go to the GCSAA website and simply copy and paste each component into the application on the website. Voila, it is done! Guess what? You have next year's application saved on your computer and all you need to do is tweak it and update it. You might have something to add or change completely; it's easy now that you have done the research and have it saved in a document on your computer. Here is the last tip, call me and I will email you the components from my 2009 National Award for Private Clubs to give you something to work off of and some ideas of where to start. You may not have all the things to say that we did or you might have a lot more to say than we did, but at least it will get you started.

**Finally, why do it?** I can tell you for myself it has been extremely rewarding to be recognized for something we consider as important as anything we do in our department. I'm a hunter, a fisherman and an outdoors person, and it is important to me that myself and my staff believe in what we do to protect and preserve our natural environment. I have been fortunate to have received a number of ELGA Awards over the last 15 years or so and each one of them has proven to be a very positive experience for me, my staff and the club. Your members, players, owners, management all want to know that you are doing things in a responsible way and they are proud to be associated with a facility that prides itself on a reputation that is recognized nationally. I hope many of you will decide to apply for an ELGA before the deadline in October; you deserve to be recognized!

- Roger Stewart CGCS  
TPC - Twin Cities