

## Verticutting - Bob Livesey, CGCS, Visalia

About a year or so ago I had a chance to sit and talk with Dr. Fred Grau. As usual, most of us who know Dr. Grau knows that in his earliest years he was quite an inovator, working with ideas of his own and of Superintendents. This dates back some 40 years or more.

Our conversation got to the pros and cons of verticutting. What does verticutting actually do? One, it smooths the surface. As you know, most turfgrasses are made up of plants that do not grow at the same rate. Those that grow faster make for an uneven or bumpy surface. This is more so on a putting green, and particularly when *Poa annua* is present. The vertical mower removes the faster growing grass blade and leaves a smooth surface.

Verticutting or vertical mowing (whichever you prefer) helps turf to be healthier. As the grass blades become older they are more susceptible to diseases. By removing the older blade and stems you are keeping a younger grass blade, thereby keeping a more upright growth. Removing the older flat lying blade, you help reduce thatch build up. By reducing thatch you increase the effectiveness of insecticides. Another benefit of verticutting is the removal or reduction of "grain" in a putting green. Today you hear very little about it.

In summary, verticutting on a regular basis is beneficial in four major ways:

1. It smooths the surface
2. Helps give a healthier turf
3. Increases the effectiveness of insecticides
4. Reduces grain.

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## MEMBERSHIP

Class B, subject to examination - taken at any regular meeting  
3 month limit.

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