

USGA

Life At 3/16"

By Pat Gross, USGA Green Section

You've heeded the warnings and raised your putting green cutting height to 3/16" just like all the experts have told you. All the greens are healthy and it looks like you're going to have a good summer. Just when you're proud and confident of your accomplishments, the golfers start complaining that the greens are too slow. "Cut 'em lower" they cry, "turn off the water," "they need more verticutting," and the ever popular "I don't care what you do, but they better be rolling 10' for the big tournament!" Don't they remember all the disease and turf loss that occurred when you tried to keep them fast all summer?

Mowing at 3/16" is a prudent practice for creeping bentgrass/Poa annua greens during the summer. There is no doubt that the increased mowing height improves turfgrass stress tolerance during the summer, and yes, the greens are going to be a little slower. Instead of caving-in to demands to lower the

mowing height, there are several things you can do to improve ball roll and keep the turf healthy at 3/16":

- 1. Keep 'em Sharp** — Greens suffer just as much from a poor quality cut as they do from an excessively low mowing height. Your mechanic should check the cutting units daily when they come in from mowing, and make any necessary adjustments. Weekly or biweekly back lapping along with checking the bedknife will keep the cutting units sharp at all times.
- 2. Proper Irrigation** — Irrigation management is far and away the most important practice for maintaining healthy turf at any cutting height. With creeping bentgrass/Poa annua greens, the goal is to keep the soil uniformly moist, but not wet. If you are on a leaching program to control salinity, go ahead and give the greens a good long soaking when necessary (4 to 6 hours) and then turn off the automatic system and go to hand watering for as long as possible.

Overly wet greens are slow, bumpy, and disease prone.

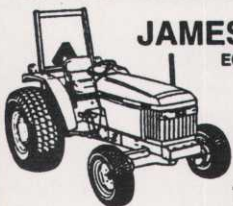
- 3. Double Mowing** — Consider double mowing your greens once a week. This is a good practice to improve surface smoothness without having to lower the cutting height. If you are short on labor, you can use a triplex mower in one direction and hand mow in the opposite direction, or even double mow with the triplex units.
- 4. Light Topdressing** — If the turf is healthy and the temperatures are not too high, it is perfectly fine to apply light sand topdressing to smooth the surface. Many superintendents refer to this as "dusting the greens" with approximately 0.1 to 0.3 cu. yds. of sand per 1000 sq. ft. every two to four weeks. Topdressing should be suspended at the first sign of turf stress or if temperatures are expected above 90° F.
- 5. Grooming** — Groomer attachments are great tools to improve the quality of cut and

Continued on page 7

TURF & INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT SINCE 1968

SALES • PARTS • SERVICE

JAMES SHERMAN JR.
EQUIPMENT ADVISOR



1 (800) 655-8873

2715 LAFAYETTE STREET • SANTA CLARA, CA 95050

JOHN DEERE
CUSHMAN
CLUB CAR
LAND PRIDE
HOWARD PRICE
DAIHATSU

Supporter Listing

SCOTTS PROTURF

Fertilizers - Poly S and new Triaform technologies Herbicides, Fungicides, Seed, Soil, tissue, water and turf disease testing.
Chuck Dal Pozzo, Sr. Tech. Rep. 510-791-8985

CALCIUM

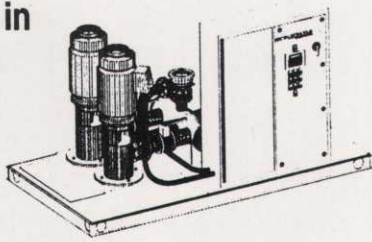
Pacific Pearl Oyster Shell — the most efficient calcium for the turfcare professional. Available from your fertilizer dealer. For Technical assistance call John Mazura.
Jericho Products, Inc. 707-762-7251

RUSSELL D. MITCHELL & ASSOC., INC.

Providing quality irrigation design and consultation services including bid document development, hydraulic analysis, and field staking.
510-939-3985 FAX 510-932-5671

FLOWTRONEX PSI Pumping Systems

Industry Leaders in
Quality, Service
and Innovation



Wes Hall
619-747-1662

Space Available

Life At 3/16" (Cont'd)

smooth the greens, especially at increased mowing heights. The groomers can be used on a frequency of two to three times per week as long as the turf is actively growing. The is another practice that should be suspended at the first sign of turf stress.

6. Rolling — Putting green rollers have proven to be very effective tools to maintain surface smoothness and slightly increase speed without negatively impacting turf health. The rollers should only be used two to three times per week to avoid abrasion injury.

When asked their preference for speed or smoothness, most golfers agree that surface smoothness is most important. Smooth greens with reasonable speed can be achieved without having to lower the mowing height by paying lose attention to the previously mentioned practices. And if the golfers persist in their desire for lightning fact greens during the summer, remind them that "slow grass is better than fast dirt." ♦

Management Books Available to Superintendents

Two books, recently released by Arbor Press in conjunction with the GCSAA have been published to assist superintendents with frequently encountered management issues.

Human Resources for Golf Course Superintendents by Robert A. Milligan and Thomas R. Maloney (\$34.95) includes sections on organization and planning; goal achievement; attracting, choosing, training and managing employees; leadership; communication and motivation. The text is clear and filled with case studies and anecdotal material, listing questions and answers, and points to ponder.

It's companion piece, is the **Superintendents Handbook of Financial Management** by Dr. Raymond S. Schmidgall (\$34.95). Besides basic accounting principles, the book steer into financial statements, budgets and break-even analysis. Working problems and multiple choice tests are included. For more information, contact the GCSAA Information Services Department.

Audobon Cooperative Sanctuary Program —A Story of Success

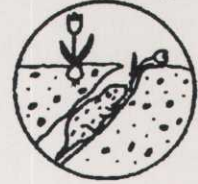
Golf Courses continued their strong involvement in the Audobon Cooperative Sanctuary System in 1995. At an average of 120 acres or more, they represent some of the most extensive sanctuary areas in the country. The results of the Audobon Cooperative Sanctuary Program are dramatic. ACSP members are literallly transforming their courses to improve habitat, protect water sources, and reduce water and pesticide use. ACSP members are also documenting the valuable role that golf courses play in providing habitat, particularly in urban and suburban areas. In 1995, the number of courses fully-certified grew to 57, while 61 began the certification process by completing environmental plans. These courses are leading the golf industry by making habitat protection and environmental conservation the standard for golf course management.

Institute Returns To The Beach

The GCSANC educational showcase, The Superintendents Institute, is ready to rumble with the recent finalization of the seminar program. This year's event, to be held in the ever popular Coconut Grove, is scheduled for Monday, November 11th and Tuesday November 12th. This year's format offers a new twist with golf preceding the seminar on Monday at 12:00 noon. Eighty golfers will enjoy one of the legendary Golf Course Architect, Allister McKenzie's finest, Pasatiempo Golf Course.

This year's program will feature two central themes; drainage and waste management. Attendees will be exposed to the principles of drainage, water movement in soils and drainage solutions in the morning session, and topics such as managing liquid and solid waste in the afternoon. The seminar will conclude with an informative panel discussion on drainage, featuring three talented superintendents. Look for more information and registration forms in early fall.

Rodent Control Specialists



Landscape Pest Control Services, Inc.

Allen Tunberg
Pest Control Advisor and Operator

P.O. Box 1166
Pleasanton, CA 94566

(510) 426-8461
State License No. 05647

R.V.



Thompson Golf Distributor
(800) 987-4002

- ♦ Plumbing
- ♦ Irrigation
- ♦ Waterworks

Don Allen, Manager
Member GCSANC



Animal Damage Management
Rodents, Birds & Other Nuisance Animals Controlled
1-800-292-9845