



On The Road With The USGA—May 2009

By Bob Brame, regional director, Central Region

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Dandelions are in full bloom and so is *Poa annua*, unless growth regulation has been applied to block seed head growth. This does not mean that every golf course should be using a growth regulator to stop *Poa annua* seeding. While it can be a good strategy for some, in other situations the most efficient approach may be to allow seed head growth and go with another type of regulator to help knock back the overall growth of this foe.

Recognizing that a weed is defined as a plant out of place, dandelions qualify with no argument, but *Poa annua* continues to straddle the line - sometimes friend and sometimes foe. If a friend, suppressing seed head growth is more likely to be a sound strategy. If more of a foe, there will likely be more bang for your buck by allowing seed heads and regulating to pull back all growth, not just seed heads. In other words, are you maintaining *Poa annua* or are you trying to reduce the amount of its encroachment?

Straddling the line is normally an indicator of politics trumping agronomics. Yet, this is not an easy issue to sort through without a comprehensive evaluation of the maintenance program and objectives being pursued. For such causes we offer on-site consultation through our Turf Advisory Service (TAS). Has your course signed up for a visit this season? Don't let the challenging economy block investing in what will pay dividends now and ongoing, guaranteed.

All areas of the lower North Central Region have gotten reasonably good rainfall so far this season. There are no current drought concerns and, in fact, most of the rainfall to date has occurred early in the week, leaving the weekends with reasonably good weather for golfers to enjoy. Several courses visited in April report better play volume so far this year as compared to the last couple of years. Good news that hopefully will continue.

Disease ([Chemical Control of Turfgrass Diseases 2015](#)) and insect concerns have been minimal, although mole cricket damage was observed on a course in southern Indiana. The activity was isolated to a single green and somewhat of a novelty in this part of the country. It does underline the importance of careful scouting and being aware of possible problems, which could develop even when it has not been an issue in the past.

Putting surface topdressing has been underway at all golf courses visited. Hopefully, this is true at your course as well. Matching topdressing sand input to growth is the guiding principle. There are a number of factors that directly impact topdressing efficiency, and one of those is the cutting height or the amount of leaf tissue into which the sand is being incorporated. Spreading the sand and then picking it up with subsequent mowing accomplishes little to no positive value. Is your topdressing program in good order relative to the specific needs at your course? How about a comprehensive review? Give us a call.

If your course hasn't signed up for a TAS visit this season, now is a great time to get it done. Payment prior to May 15th secures a \$500 discount. Even with early payment to lock in on the discount, visits can be scheduled any time during the season that best fits your course's needs. Give us a call, drop an email or signup online. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you.

[USGA Course Consulting Service](#)

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