



This custom water wand makes quick work of clearing debris from putting surfaces before mowing.

WATER WAND WORKS WONDERS

BY JOHN DANIELS | AGRONOMIST, CENTRAL REGION

Autumn is upon us. It won't be long before acorns, black walnuts and other tree debris begin to rain down on putting greens, tees, fairways and bunkers. Tree debris can become a nuisance for golf course management, especially considering the sheer quantity of material that can litter the playing surfaces. Take for example a white oak tree, which can produce upwards of 2,000 acorns. All it takes is for one acorn to become wedged under a mower to cause significant damage to a putting green.

As such, every fall a great deal of effort is focused on removing acorns and other debris prior to mowing. Unlike leaves, which can be easily blown off putting surfaces with a backpack blower, acorns and other small nuts present a greater challenge given their weight and resistance to air movement.

The maintenance staff at Norwood Hills Country Club in St. Louis, Missouri, developed a custom tool, which they refer to as a water wand, to expedite the removal of acorns. The water wand is an approximately 4-foot-long, single piece of 0.75-inch diameter metal tubing with a 45-degree bend near one end that is

equipped with a nozzle. The metal nozzle is cone shaped, has a 0.375-inch diameter orifice and is pressed into the metal tubing. The end opposite the nozzle is threaded so that it can be attached to the end of a 1-inch hose. The water wand also has a plastic handle, similar to what would be found on a string trimmer, mounted to the middle of the tubing.

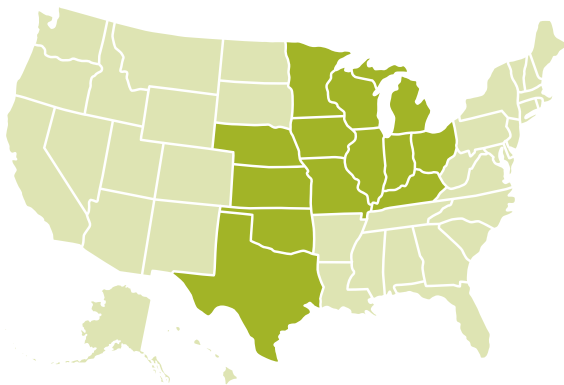
When the water wand is connected to a hose it creates a stream of water that jets some 25 feet. The water easily blasts acorns, leaves, sticks and other debris, clearing a putting green in a minute or less. If the water grazes the putting surface, it will stand up any leggy turf. However, any raised turf is typically only temporary and will disappear once the putting green is mowed. One person can quickly clear a green using a water wand, but a team of two working together is more efficient and helps to reduce issues with water inadvertently hitting the putting surface.

So, if you are struggling to keep your putting greens free of damaging acorns, consider using a water wand at your golf facility. They work wonderfully.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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