



Circle mowing can reduce grain and improve surface uniformity.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO GO AROUND IN CIRCLES

BY JOHN DANIELS | AGRONOMIST, CENTRAL REGION

Going around in circles is usually not a good thing, but when it comes to mowing fairways and tees it can be just what the turf needs.

Circle mowing – where an operator continuously makes wide, overlapping turns – is an effective surface management technique for combating grain formation. Although it might look strange to golfers, this process is customary for warm-season turf like bermudagrass that produces an expansive network of aboveground stems called stolons. Left unchecked, bermudagrass stolons can extend to a foot or more in length, causing scruffy playing surfaces and potentially snagging the club of an unsuspecting golfer.

The easiest and least-invasive way to address an abundance of leggy bermudagrass on a fairway or tee is to mow in a circle. Attacking the grain at many unique angles reduces the chance of a long stolon escaping the cut. Brushing or raking the turf immediately prior to circle mowing can further increase the

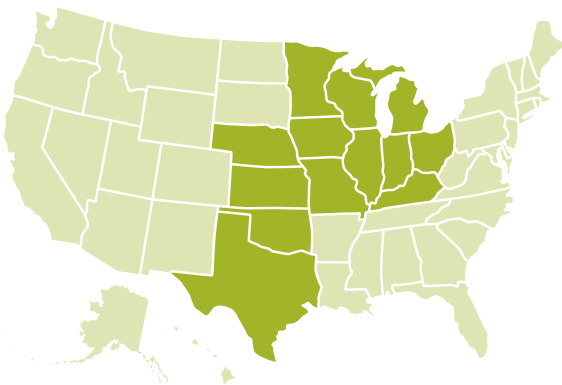
effectiveness of this practice. Of course, this will likely cause a little bit more mess in the short term, but the long-term improvements to the surface that can be achieved are generally well worth the added cleanup.

Repeatedly mowing turf in the same direction can make grain formation worse, so it is important to change the mowing direction every few days. However, even regularly switching up the direction may not be enough to combat an unruly bermudagrass. Going around in circles might be the solution you need to get things smooth again



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