



Got Roots? Wash And See.

By Chris Hartwiger, director, Course Consulting Service | August 18, 2017



yield valuable information about the root system.

The A soil profile sampler is a great way to take a quick look at what is growing beneath the surface; but if you are curious about the depth and quality of the root system in your putting greens, a hole cutter and a garden hose are the way to go.

The Process

Step 1: Take a sample – Using a hole cutter, take a plug from a representative area of a putting green.

Step 2: Wash the soil off the plug – Be gentle during the washing process; too much water pressure may wash off roots along with soil. When sampling bermudagrass putting greens, gently wash out the sand that has been packed into the stolon layer just below the surface.

Step 3: Make observations – After you have washed off the soil, spend some time making observations. Note as many things as you can, including these key pieces of information:

- How deep are the roots?
- What did you notice about aeration holes?

- Are there signs of new root development?
- How did the stolons look?
- Are new plants emerging?

Step 4: Repeat this process seasonally

Why Bother?

Performing this process regularly, season after season, will help you recognize and document changes in the root system. You will learn things about how your management inputs and weather impact turf growth. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- When does most of the root growth happen?
- What happens during high-stress periods?
- Is the root system responding to the fertility and management program?
- Is the root system good but the surface lacking?

There is power in measuring and documenting something. Peter Drucker, frequently referred to as the founder of modern business management, is often credited as saying, “you cannot manage what you don’t measure.” That statement also holds true in turf management. Finally, as your knowledge and awareness of what is happening with roots increases, you will be in a stronger position to communicate with golfers and decision-makers at your facility.

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