



2018 USGA Turf Colorant Workshop

By Patrick O'Brien, agronomist, Southeast Region | February 16, 2018



Applying turf colorants to fairways is much different than applying fertilizer or pesticides; it requires specialized equipment and techniques.

The sixth annual USGA Turfgrass Colorant Workshop was held at the Pinehurst Resort in Pinehurst, North Carolina, on January 30, 2018. Approximately 70 superintendents attended the event that featured a great lineup of speakers including Dr. Grady Miller of North Carolina State University, John Jeffreys of Pinehurst Resort, Jackson Clemons of Caledonia Golf and Fish Club, Robert Vaughan of Brunswick Plantation and Sid Beighley of Turf Technologies.

The speakers shared information on the art and science of applying turf colorants to warm-season fairways. On-course demonstrations gave attendees an up-close-and-personal view of the application process. Additionally, new spray boom technology and environmentally friendly products used to clean sprayers were presented. Several workshop attendees were interviewed and shared what they felt were the best take-home messages for their golf courses. Here is what they had to say:

- Rolling fairways prior to colorant applications can result in an aesthetically pleasing striping effect.
- Proper sprayer calibration and clean, unworn nozzles are essential for every colorant application.

- Environmental conditions must be appropriate for applying colorants. The presence of frost or dew with little or no wind is vital for an even application. If the correct conditions are not present, do not apply colorants.
- Clean fairways the day before colorant applications and cover all course accessories such as drains, irrigation heads and yardage markers.
- Spray perpendicular to the line of play. Streaking and minor mistakes are masked when colorants are applied perpendicular to play.
- Any color can be created to suit your facility's needs. On-the-fly adjustments to sprayer pressure, driving speed and nozzles can help improve the colorant appearance.

Applying turf colorants can produce the aesthetics and playability desired by golfers while helping a golf facility's bottom line. Workshop attendees went home with valuable information and developed a network of contacts in this emerging field. Contact a USGA Agronomist for more information on turf colorant applications or information regarding next year's workshop.

Southeast Region Agronomists:

Steve Kammerer, regional director - skammerer@usga.org

Chris Hartwiger, director, USGA Course Consulting Service- chartwiger@usga.org

Patrick M O'Brien, agronomist - patobrien@usga.org

Todd Lowe, agronomist - tlowe@usga.org

Addison Barden, agronomist - abarden@usga.org

[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service.](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)