



September Regional Roundtable

By John Foy, regional director, Southeast Region and
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John Foy – Late Summer Pest-Management Concerns

Maintaining an acceptable level of disease, insect, nematode and weed pest control or suppression is an ongoing battle on golf courses throughout the Southeast Region. For courses in the lower portion of the region – especially the coastal areas – fairy ring flair-ups on putting greens and resurgence in mole cricket activity recently have been the most common pest-management concerns. At many facilities, preventative fungicide and insecticide treatments were conducted earlier in the year, but unfortunately sufficient residual control through summer has not been provided.

The combination of Type 1 (i.e., stressed or necrotic turf) and irregular Type 3 (i.e., rings of *Basidiomycetes* mushrooms) fairy rings have been observed on putting green surfaces. Routine early morning mowing does remove fairy ring mushrooms; however, fairy rings still negatively affect aesthetics as well as ball roll. Just as a reminder, irrigation after fungicide applications that target fairy ring is a standard recommendation to improve the effectiveness of fungicide treatments by moving the material into the upper



An example of typical mole cricket tunneling activity and the type of damage being experienced on many courses.

rootzone. Also, it has been observed that some of the newer fungicides labeled for fairy ring control are effective in suppressing both Type 1 and Type 3 rings, but it can still take several weeks for turf to recover and mushrooms to disappear.

Rhizoctonia leaf and sheath spot on bermudagrass putting greens is another mid-to late-summer disease concern. The article, [Diseases of Cool and Warm Season Putting Greens](#), provides an excellent review of this problem.

Throughout the Deep South and Florida, mole crickets have long been a major insect pest problem. Effective control treatments are available; however, after a mild winter, mole cricket pressure in central to south Florida has been extremely high. At courses where preventative treatments were earlier conducted, residual control has started to break down and moderate to heavy outbreaks of mole crickets have been occurring. In addition to the resulting turf damage, rapid invasion of tropical signalgrass and other weeds is another concern where mole cricket damage is experienced. Closely monitoring for mole cricket activity and conducting spot treatments with insecticides should remain a high priority for the next two or three months as courses begin to prepare for the rapidly approaching winter play season in Florida.

Patrick O'Brien - A Turfgrass Lesson and a Putting Tip, Too



Leaves missing on one side of the golf hole occurs on all ultradwarf bermudagrass putting greens.

A question frequently asked during Course Consulting Service visits to golf courses with ultradwarf putting greens is, “Why do the turfgrass leaves seem to flake off on one side of the hole, but not the other?” The ragged edge on one side of a hole makes it appear that something went wrong with the hole changing operation. However, the hole changing operation is not the problem. The ragged edge is the result of the stoloniferous growth habit of ultradwarf bermudagrass.

Stolons are above-ground reproductive structures that look like a stem with tiny leaves at the end. Stolons are rooted along the stem but there are no roots immediately beneath the leaves. When a hole is cut, some of the stolons are cut in a place where

there is nothing to anchor the leaves. The unsupported leaves fall off with the brush of a hand when picking a ball out of the hole. A pattern emerges because the stolons tend to orient themselves in the same direction and leaves on the down-grain side of the hole tend to flake off during the day. This phenomenon happens with all ultradwarf varieties and, unfortunately, we have never seen anything other than plastic, hole target liners prevent leaf flaking. The good news for golfers is that leaf flaking is a visible signal of how the ball roll will tend to break. This bit of knowledge may help observant golfers gain a few strokes when putting on ultradwarf surfaces.

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