



Regional Roundtable—A Bunker Tip and Fairy Ring Alert

By Chris Hartwiger, director, Course Consulting Service and
Todd Lowe, agronomist, Southeast Region

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The Aussie Method Gets Better – A simple tip can help you perfect your bunker faces.

By Chris Hartwiger, director, Course Consulting Service

During the last week of September, I had the opportunity to serve as the agronomist for the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur at Hillwood Country Club in Nashville, Tenn. The course was a fantastic host site and the turf maintenance staff – under the direction of golf course superintendent David Robertson – was a joy to work with. By all accounts, the players enjoyed the playing conditions and competition.

During the final days of preparation, I observed the staff doing something unusual with the bunkers. I knew they had adopted the Aussie method of bunker raking – i.e., keeping the faces smooth and raking the bottoms of the bunkers. It appeared they were using a paint roller on a telescoping handle to smooth the faces. Actually, they had taken an inexpensive swimming pool toy known as a “noodle” and placed it over the metal paint roller frame. The noodle does not absorb moisture and it is flexible enough to conform to the faces. The process and finished product are shown in these pictures.



A Hillwood Country Club staff member smooths a bunker face using a swimming pool “noodle” attached to a paint roller and a telescoping handle.



The finished bunkers prepared using the Aussie Method not only look and play great, but they are less prone to washouts because of the firm faces.

This tip is simple, inexpensive, and may just help you continue to improve your bunkers. For more information, view the [USGA Green Section Digital Collection - Managing Bunkers](#).

Fairy Rings Reappear

By Todd Lowe, agronomist, Southeast Region

Extended wet conditions that have occurred on golf courses throughout the Deep South are causing persistent fairy ring problems. Fairy rings are caused by fungi that reside within the rootzone and feed on organic matter. They get their name from the fact that some fairy rings produce mushrooms that emerge in ring-like patterns in turf. Fairy rings can occur on all golf course playing surfaces but generally are considered nuisances on putting greens.

There are a several different types of fungi that can produce fairy rings and a variety of symptoms ranging from faint, green rings – with or without mushrooms – to large destructive rings. The green coloration associated with fairy rings is believed to be caused by the fungi digesting organic matter, which releases nitrogen that is taken up by the turf. The fungi also can produce hydrophobic conditions within fairy rings, causing turf damage from drought stress.

It must be understood that it is impractical to eradicate fairy rings from golf course putting greens. Cultural practices for managing fairy ring symptoms on putting greens range from applying supplemental fertilization to mask green rings to venting and applying wetting agents. Large, destructive rings oftentimes occur on greens with elevated organic matter. In these cases, additional core

aeration or sand-injection cultivation – e.g., DryJect® – is recommended to remove and dilute organic matter in the rootzone.

In areas, where fairy rings are a chronic issue, fungicides may help reduce their persistence and severity. See [Fairy Ring 101](#) for a list of effective fungicides for golf course putting greens. As with all pesticides, it is important to deliver the chemical to the target area where the pest resides. For fairy rings, a drench treatment is recommended so that the fungicide infiltrates the thatch/organic layer. Solid “pencil-tine” aeration or pitchforking, along with wetting agents, also will help incorporate fungicides.

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