

Creative Solutions To Deal With Mandatory Water Cut Backs

By Pat Gross, regional director, West Region

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The impact of the drought has become much more visible over the past month with the arrival of warm temperatures and the mandate in California to reduce water use by 25 percent based on 2013 consumption. This update highlights recent observations from courses that are managing during the drought.



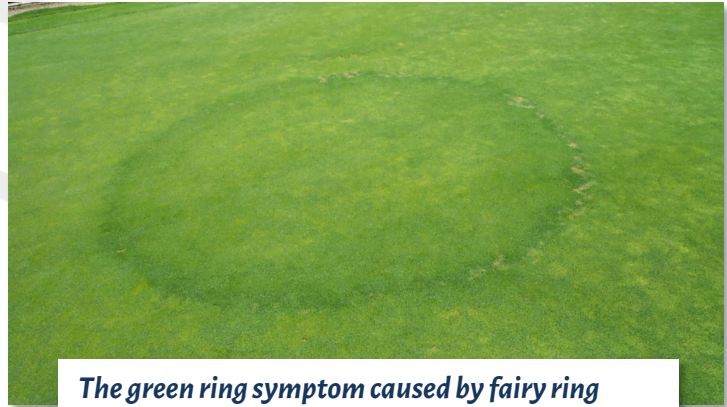
Eliminating irrigation between forward tees and the beginnings of fairways has resulted in a 21 percent water savings without any loss in playability at this northern California course.

Saving water by eliminating irrigation

One of the most common ways to reduce water use on golf courses is to curtail or eliminate irrigation in the rough. Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club in Menlo Park, Calif. eliminated irrigation by turning off two to three irrigation lateral pipes in areas between forward tees and the beginning of fairways. As a result, 375 sprinklers are no longer operated and water use has been reduced by 21 percent without any negative impact on playing quality.

Fairy ring disease more visible as a result of deficit irrigation

As some courses have reduced water use, green rings – a typical symptom of fairy ring disease – are becoming more visible. Fairy ring disease is caused by several basidiomycete fungi, many of which are most active in midsummer when temperatures are warm. The water-repellant soil conditions that tend to occur along the edges of fairy rings also are more prominent as superintendents intentionally reduce irrigation to save water.



The green ring symptom caused by fairy ring disease has become more prominent as superintendents reduce irrigation to save water.

Successful water management at the U.S. Senior Open Championship

Water management was one of the most important aspects of the U.S. Senior Open Championship at Del Paso Country Club in Sacramento, Calif. Leading up to the event, irrigation heads were raised and leveled, water pressure was audited at each head and worn nozzles were replaced. Additionally, wetting



Andrew Crawford, a volunteer at the U.S. Senior Open Championship at Del Paso Country Club in Sacramento, Calif., applies water to strategic areas of the 18th green during the waning hours of the day.

agents and growth regulators were regularly applied to yield a significant reduction in water use while maintaining a firm, fast and relatively green golf course. Eight volunteers were assigned to hand

water greens, approaches and green surrounds while the overhead irrigation was shut off for seven days throughout the

championship. The result was firm, healthy and impressively consistent putting surfaces. Furthermore, up to 12 additional staff members were assigned to hand water primary playing areas during the afternoon while the course remained under deficit irrigation.

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