

Straw Blankets

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region | March 3, 2017



Straw blankets help prevent desiccation in droughty areas by protecting turf from drying winds.

The limited precipitation, low humidity and excessive wind that are common to many parts of the West during winter can quickly dry out turfgrass plants. Exposed areas, such as south-facing bunker slopes, are the most vulnerable to desiccation from these conditions.

Each year, Steve Sarro, director of grounds at Pinehurst Country Club in Denver, and his team cover select bunker slopes with straw blankets just before the ground freezes to protect the turf from desiccation. These blankets are a highly effective way to retain moisture in the crowns and root zones. Covering desiccation-susceptible turf areas with straw blankets during the past two winters has saved the staff at Pinehurst Country Club countless hours of labor-intensive soil prep, sodding and hand watering to repair damaged turf in the spring.

West Region Agronomists:

Patrick J. Gross, regional director - pgross@usga.org

Larry W. Gilhuly, agronomist - lgilhuly@usga.org

Brian S. Whitlark, agronomist - bwhitlark@usga.org

Blake Meentemeyer, agronomist - bmeentemeyer@usga.org

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

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)