

## “The Fairways Were Perfect. Why Did They Tear Them To Shreds?”

By Blake Meentemeyer, agronomist, West Region | May 5, 2017



*Superintendents implement various cultural practices to manage lateral turf growth and reduce thatch. Vertical mowing and aeration are a couple of examples.*

**G**olf is played on many different fairway grasses in the West Region. Bermudagrass, for example, is the dominate species for fairways in the southern part of the region and has a naturally aggressive growth rate that produces thatch rapidly. If left unchecked, bermudagrass will grow laterally at the surface, potentially causing turf health and playability issues later in the season. These issues often arise during the prime playing season when the days are long and golfers are plenty. To maintain good turf health and playability in bermudagrass fairways, superintendents utilize a variety of cultural practices that manage lateral turf growth and thatch accumulation.

Fairway aeration and vertical mowing have been a common sight during recent Course Consulting Service visits in the southern part of the West Region. In Palm Springs and southern Arizona, these practices are scheduled for July and August. Aeration and vertical

mowing temporarily disrupt playing conditions, but it is important to remember that increasing the intensity of these practices will yield an increase in summer fairway performance. These maintenance practices are critical to providing the very best conditioning, plant health and playability during the long summer days ahead.

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