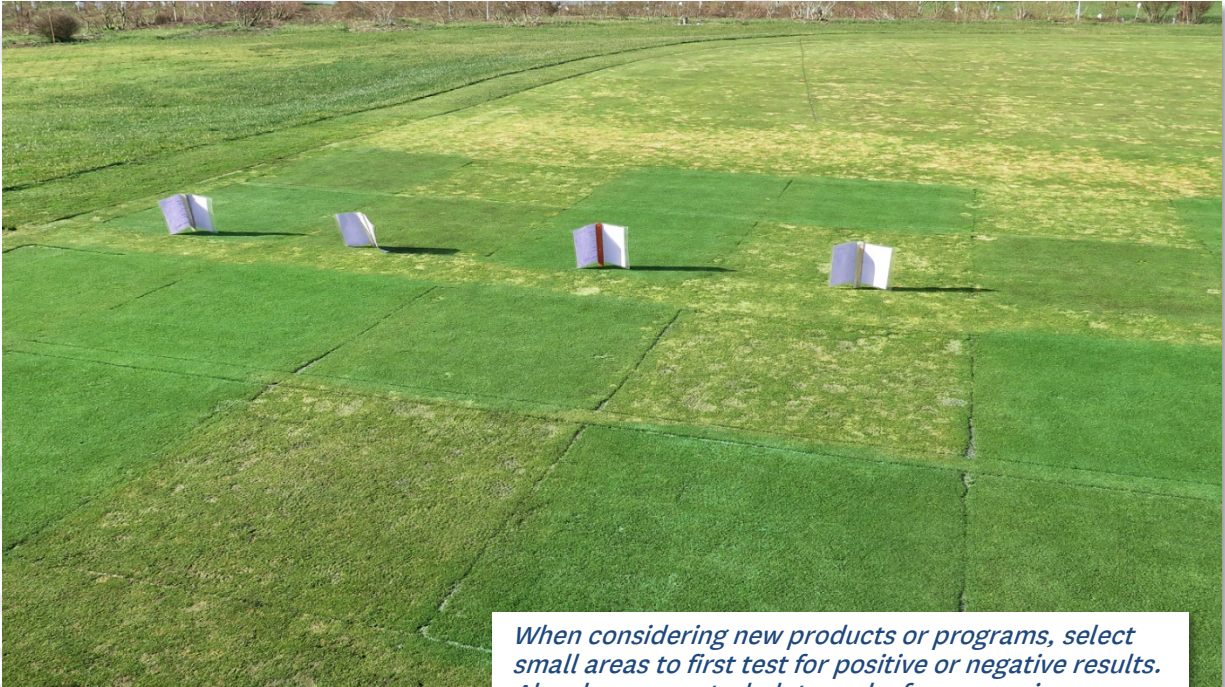


Demonstrate! Demonstrate! Demonstrate!

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region | February 16, 2018



When considering new products or programs, select small areas to first test for positive or negative results. Also, keep a control plot nearby for comparison.

One fundamental recommendation is universally valid at golf courses around the world: Demonstrate any new product or program at your facility before adopting it as part of the overall golf course maintenance program. Demonstrations should occur on a small scale and for an extended period of time before expanding the program to the entire golf course.

There are many examples of this recommendation having helped establish a new program. There are equally many examples where following this recommendation helped prevent unforeseen problems caused by a program or product that was not a good fit for a facility. One positive example is fairway topdressing. The perceived cost of fairway topdressing once prevented many facilities from implementing this beneficial program - enter the demonstration. Many golf courses tried small-scale, affordable topdressing demonstrations on one fairway or the approaches. In many cases, the results were so positive that facility-decision makers provided the necessary resources to expand topdressing to many other portions of the golf course. Demonstrating the benefits of topdressing at a reasonable cost provided the impetus for expanding the program.

Prudent demonstration has also been extremely helpful in the control of Microdochium patch. This persistent pathogen has long been a scourge of *Poa annua* putting surfaces in

cool climates. However, ongoing [research at Oregon State University](#) shows very good results controlling this pathogen with a combination of various fertilizers and mineral oil. This research is now entering its third year of positive results, making it a perfect example of one program that could be demonstrated at golf courses with persistent Microdochium patch issues. Before recommending this program for all putting surfaces, demonstrate it on a nursery or practice putting green. If the results after one year are good, the program can be expanded to other putting greens. Meanwhile, keep in contact with other facilities that have had success with the program to learn from their experience.

The entire point of testing new products or programs is to enter any new realm with caution and an open mind. There is a big wide world of new ideas being introduced; however, small-scale demonstration followed by full-scale implementation is always the best approach.

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