

MIDWEST BREEZES

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



The Clip Conundrum

Anyone who grows grass for a living (or has a lawn) knows that eventually you will need to cut it. The better the growth, the more frequent the required cut. People who play golf like their grass cut short so they can find their ball to hit it. Some like it shorter than others. Long grass can be a huge, unpleasant topic of conversation in the Clubhouse. This could be on the tees, greens fairway or rough. Grass growth can depend on a number of factors: fertility, sun light, soil types etc. The formula challenge for grass growers is: the healthier the growth= more grass to cut + the more frequently it needs to be cut = more grass clippings.

Grass clippings can be a huge problem. They are the “waste” product of the mowing process. They can leave a finely cut turf unsightly and messy. “Messiness” on turf can affect the aesthetics and the playability of the turf. Who doesn’t hate seeing annoying clumps of clippings left on finely cut fairways or surrounds, or worse, piles dumped in the woods or tall grass areas and just left to fester, rot and stink? So my enquiring little mind starting asking other MAGCS Member Superintendents, “What do you do at your golf course to manage your grass clippings?”

Rob Foster, Lake Bluff Golf Club

- Fairways: “This past year we picked up clippings on the fairways 60% of the time. The rest of the time we just cut it and blow it away”.
- Tees: “We pick it up and distribute in the rough”.
- Greens: “We pick it up and distribute in the rough”.
“During times of extreme clippings we will pile it up in designated areas and pick it up later”.

Chad Walk, Old Oak Country Club

- Fairways: “Ideally we cut the fairways dry to minimize the mess. We will cut twice a week. I use Primo to reduce the clipping yield. When do cut them wet, we follow behind with a blower”.
- Tees: “On tees I also use Primo. We collect the clip and distribute in the rough areas”.
- Greens: “We collect the clip from the walk mowers and store in golf cart. We have a dump site on the property that we recycle the clippings by mixing them with soil”.

Craig Lewis, Shepard's Crook Golf Club

- Fairways: “We mow late in the morning and return clip. We use Primo to help reduce the clip”.
- Tees: “We use Primo and Cutless. We collect and distribute in the rough and native areas”.
- Greens: “Same for greens as tees”.
“We have a lull in play between 10 am and 2 pm which we use as a maintenance window to do a lot of our tee and fairway mowing”.

Michael Huestis, Chicago Highlands Golf Club

- Fairways: “We collect the clippings on fairways. We park a Dakota material handler with a tractor in a central location in which the guys empty their baskets into. One guy will move it to next location as needed. We mow three times per week”.
- Tees: “We walk mow three times per week. The clip is dumped into the back of carts”.
- Greens: “Greens are walk mowed six times per week. The clip is dumped into the back of the carts”.
“We chop up the clumps in the rough and blow excessive clumps as needed. We use growth regulators on all the bent turf. We take all the clippings and mix them with the soil that the semi- trucks continue to bring as fill for the site”. **-OC**