

Becker devises poa annua solution

BY BOB SPIWAK

Ask any golf course superintendent what he fears most about his greens and the answer will likely be poa annua taking up residence. Poa, or annual bluegrass, is as invasive as crabgrass, and while puttable, it weakens and disfigures bentgrass greens. It is prolific, goes to seed even when cut at putting heights, and delights in traveling to a locations on the soles of golf shoes and on mowers.

Superintendent Chris Becker runs the greens show at Fairways Golf Course in Cheney, Wash. His job began three years ago

when the course was built. His mission: the finest putting surface around. This meant keeping the Pennncross bentgrass greens completely free of poa annua.

The weed thrives in this geographical area. Springs are wet, autumns a little less so. Summer days rarely go above 90 degrees and winters offer a warming blanket of snow that protects the shallow-rooted grass.

Becker's formula for poa-free greens is based on a decade of experience as a superintendent. In this time he has continually tested products, talked informally with other super-

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ON THE GREEN

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