

BY JOHN WALSH

The big three

Oregon superintendent benefits from PGRs in multiple ways

Darren Klein likes the results of using plant growth regulators, specifically the labor savings, consistent greens and seedhead control.

Klein, golf course superintendent at the private 18-hole Brasada Canyons, maintains the 1-year-old course that plays throughout the foot hills of Powell Butte, Ore. Klein has been growing in the course at Brasada, which has 240 members, for three years. He worked at Eagle Crest Resort outside Redmond, Ore., for 10 years before coming to Brasada. The layout features nine holes in canyons and on ridges. The fairways, rough and tees are an 80/20 mix of bluegrass and ryegrass. The greens are A-4 bentgrass.

Klein works with an annual maintenance budget of \$900,000, \$42,000 of which is allotted for chemicals and \$2,200 for plant growth regulators. He has a 22-person crew during the season and six full-timers.

Klein gets his plant growth regulator application rates right off the label.

For Klein, the biggest benefits of using plant growth regulators are the control of clippings on fairways and labor-saving costs as a result of being able to eliminate one mowing day per week. He mows fairways four times a week during the height of

growing season, and that tapers off to two or three times a week during the spring and fall. He sprays fairways with Primo once a month during the growing season, which is May, June, July and sometimes August in central Oregon.

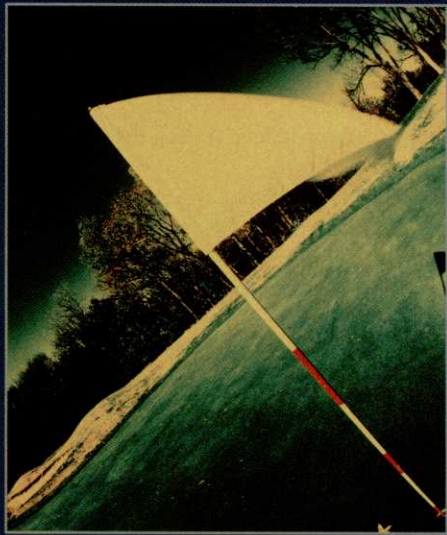
"Once the course was grown in and we were up and mowing the fairways, we

sprayed to help tillering and density," he says. "Now we use PGRs to control clippings in the fairways."

PGR use on greens helps give them consistent ball roll throughout the day. Green speeds run between 10 feet and 10.5 feet during the season and 12.5 feet during tournaments. He sprays greens,



Out of \$42,000 spent on chemicals annually, superintendent Darren Klein spends \$2,200 on plant growth regulators.



Darren Klein purchases plant growth regulators monthly because he doesn't like storing many chemicals on property.

which are mowed daily, every two weeks with Embark. The choice of Embark was influenced by a plan suggested to Klein for *Poa* control on greens from his distributor, Wilbur-Ellis. Klein says the A-4 bentgrass is dense enough to begin with, so he doesn't use PGRs to improve the density of the turf on the greens.

Klein doesn't use PGRs in the rough.

When applying PGRs, Klein uses the same TeeJet nozzles that he uses when applying fungicides. He doesn't tank mix the fungicides and PGRs when applying them, but he'll tank mix iron to mask any yellowing that might occur. He uses a granular fertilizer rather than a liquid fertilizer on the fairways, so the PGRs aren't tank mixed with fertilizer either. The PGR applications are timed between the fertilizer applications.

Klein has seen a little bit of *Poa annua* in the fairways but nothing on the greens so far.

"It's a losing battle," he says about eradicating *Poa*. It's about how slow you can let it move in."

Klein won't alter his PGR program even if *Poa* encroaches into the greens.



"We'll just have to live with it," he says.

Klein buys Primo and Embark through Wilbur-Ellis.

"I used to use Primo on everything, but the distributor recommended Embark," he says. "Embark used to be weather sensitive, but now it's been reformulated to be more user friendly."

When it comes to purchasing PGRs, Klein does it monthly, not in bulk at the beginning or end of the season.

"I don't like storing a lot of chemicals on property, plus Wilbur-Ellis is close by," he says. **GCI**