

Inside The Fringe

Top 10 Golfers' gripes

We asked Joe Boe, superintendent of Coral Oaks GC in Cape Coral, Fla., to list his top 10 reasons why golfers gripe about greens. Take it away, Joe:

10. Aerify again? Didn't you just do that last month?

My response: "No, no — that was two months ago. Remember, we had to put off the last aerification because of the big (insert name here) tournament last month?"

9. Your greens are too slow.

This usually comes from members of your MGA or LGA (men's or lady's griping associations) who are on the traveling team. They have played at (insert name here) country club and the greens were *very* fast. Also, this statement usually comes from the same people who praised "our greens" only three months before when they were stimping at nine.

8. Your greens are too fast.

See No. 9 and reverse the scenario.

7. The par 3s are completely ruined with all of those ball marks.

This gripe is usually followed with, "What are you going to do about this?" What you'd like to do is set up a hidden video camera and film play on the par 3s and then show the tape at the next membership meeting. What you must do is instruct your staff to repair as many ball marks as possible while staying ahead of morning play.

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Trying to Make Peace with Your Poa Annua

By Dave Wilber

Anyone who has ever grown or tried to kill annual bluegrass knows that Poa annua can speak. It leans across the table and vows to be yours forever. Then there are the days when it declares absolute hatred for you and promises to fill your earthly existence with daily hassles should you be stupid enough to stick around.

No superintendents will admit to chatting to their greens when they are alone with them. But to ask what the problem is or to compliment performance is part of the dialogue a super-

If Poa could be grown everywhere, we'd never want to putt on anything else.

intendent can have with Poa in the quiet moments when no one is looking. Only the mouthless Poa is brave enough to talk back if a superintendent is really listening.

Imagine talking to a golfer and trying to explain that after a conversation with several of your pet Poa plants that you've decided not to water for one more day. Such a statement could buy you a trip to a place where the walls are padded and the doors can only be opened from the outside.

The natural selection process that produces Poa provides the fulcrum of

the balance between your love-and-hate relationship with the grass because there's Poa that certainly is the best putting surface you can imagine. It may only be a few square feet, but it demands respect and the thought that if it could be grown everywhere, we'd never want to putt on anything else.

New breeding programs and the possible advent of creeping bluegrass may make that possible. But don't hold your breath because the best Poa plants are the ones in the Reptans sub-type and seed heads aren't an option and may be tough to get into production.

As for the hate side of things, don't forget the last few years of guaranteed Poa killers, sold under all kinds of auspices to get you to do something — anything — to rid yourself of the stuff. In the name of battle, some have suited up and gone to "The Annual Bluegrass Wars."

Regardless of its proven ability to naturally select, the battle is on. For some, Poa must die. If it does not, the vow is to return another day with a bigger cannon to shoot. Now we hear of people waiting patiently for bentgrass that's resistant to non-selective herbicides, which would be a big gun to bring to battle.

Still, some are called to protect the Poa from cruelty. They coddle it, sing to it, feed it special food, groom it with special tools, give it light, extra water, shade, blankets for warmth and

simply let it be known that no Poa will be sacrificed on their watches.

In modern times, we have educated the golfer more about Poa annua than we should have. Recently, a green committee chairman was pontificating to his

superintendent and I about how bad Poa is and how the club should get rid of it at any cost. I couldn't resist to ask him to show me his favorite few square feet of the green we were standing on. I also asked him to show me his least fa-

vorite square feet. He picked Poa annua patches in both cases — and he didn't even hear the grass talking to him.

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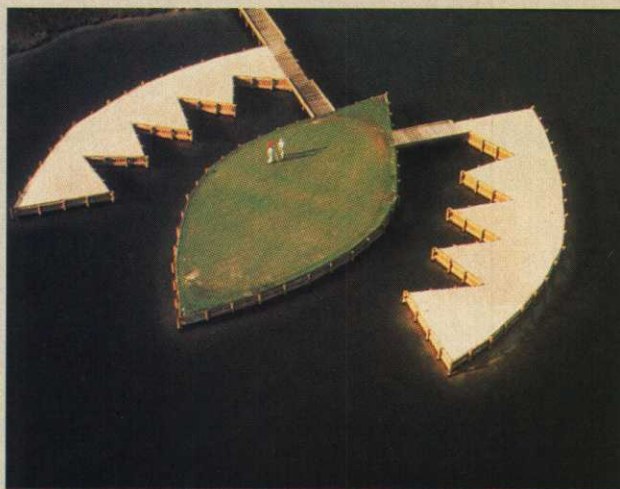
One Man's Graceful Green Complex Is Another Man's ...

Golf course architect Desmond Muirhead has been called the Salvador Dali of design. The 77-year-old is known to use greens, bunkers and water to create outlandish holes that people either admire or abhor. (Below, right) One of

Muirhead's most well-known designs is No. 7 at Stone Harbor GC, known as Clashing Rocks.

"The symbol came from my subconscious, where it had probably been hanging around for a great many years," Muirhead explains. "According to Jungian psychology, it is a mandala, a sanskrit word meaning perfect circle which is the most common archetype drawn in psychoanalysis. The central form is female and the jagged forms are male."

The No. 6 hole at Muirhead's Shinyo, Japan, course (below, left) — where the bunker in front of the green is in the shape of a Japanese fan — is also a popular design. So is the 10th, or Dragon Hole (bottom), at Oak Village near Tokyo.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DESMOND MUIRHEAD