

The theme for this issue of *Golfdom* is “controlling spring pests.” Most of these pests you can find on your course, although you won’t necessarily find them in any

entomology book. There have been some seminars dedicated to control measures for these pests, but their life cycles are not completely understood and therefore do not allow for control in the juvenile stages. The amount of damage the adults will do to a golf course often depends on where they spent their larval stages. Here they are:

■ **Ten-toed Divot Whacker:** This pest will buzz the turf several times without making contact. However, this member of the bi-pedal class can just as often displace large amounts of turf without ever actually striking its intended target, a small white ball. The thoracic appendages of this pest are ideally suited for grasping and swinging rod-like objects like a golf club. Yet, oddly enough, they seem ill-suited for handling a sand bottle or sand scoop. Consequently this pest may leave large, jagged holes in the turf, which can provide nesting sites for the Bug-eyed Huff and Puff (see last item).

■ **Knuckle-headed Path Dodger:** Preferring soft, wet soil and turf, this pest will avoid concrete and asphalt at all costs to find its favorite rutting areas. When these wet areas are not available, this pest will search for thin brown worn-out turf areas to travel. During dry periods, when wet areas are scarce, these creatures will still find a way to sneak off well-defined travel routes and dig bare spots and pot holes especially around greens and tees. Sometimes Bug-eyed Huff and Puffs will viciously attack Path Dodgers out in the open or lay in ambush near the clubhouse.

■ **Five-Hour Round Slug:** Named for the length of time it takes to make its way around a golf course, this slow-moving pest is a target for many predators. Often defenseless but mainly clueless, this pest can disrupt the normal diurnal cycle of many of the inhabitants on the golf course, including the maintenance crew, which must wait for the slug to pass since it is a protected species. The USGA has spent lots of research dollars

Please Pass the Bug Spray

BY JOEL JACKSON



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to try to eradicate this pest on public golf courses. However, after viewing professional golf tournaments in person and on television, it appears that these slow-moving pests have evolved from a strain of super slugs. The Bug-eyed Huff and Puff feeds on slugs.

■ **Sand Dabbler:** Attracted to sandy areas to burrow and forage, golf course bunkers are a favorite habitat of these creatures. You don’t often see them in action, but they can be identified by the variety of tracks and markings in the sand. Most organisms use camouflage or other behaviors to try and avoid being attacked or preyed upon. The Sand Dabbler has no such worry and takes no pains to hide his comings and goings. This behavior often stimulates and irritates the Bug-eyed Huff and Puff, who also inhabits these areas.

■ **Bug-eyed Huff and Puffs:** Probably the most prolific and damaging of all golf course pests. Easily angered and quite aggressive, this pest can attack without warning. While it often displays a noisy buzzing sound, it can also work silently to weaken the turfgrass. This pest can mimic the damage of all the other pests listed above. Often this pest does its worst damage when the superintendent is away from the golf course.

Recommended control strategies for these pests include communications and education, but their thick exoskeletons are hard to penetrate. Repeat applications of these measures will be necessary at regular intervals. Do not be surprised if you only get limited results. In some cases peer pressure from the colony can be effective when applied by a dominant organism.

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