

Good greens in early spring

Aaron Patton, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of turfgrass science at Purdue University and devotes a portion of his research to improving golf course playing conditions. He can be reached at ajpatton@purdue.edu.

Q What can superintendents do to provide greens that play well early in the spring?

I suggest doing five things. First, inspect all the greens and repair damaged areas. There is always some damage that occurs over winter from rodents, cross-country skiers, winter golfers or limbs falling on greens. Plug out damaged spots, hand topdress small areas with blemishes and blow off all the debris before rolling.

Second, roll to start the season. Greens in spring are usually uneven and a little soft. Rolling will smooth out uneven spots from frost heaving, help firm the surface up and to the delight of golfers, increase green speed.

Third, before you set the mowing height, stop to consider that spring is when creeping bentgrass and annual bluegrass will grow the root system they will need to last the entire summer. Are you sure you want to start stressing the grass right off the bat by using a low mowing height? Ease into mowing and low mowing heights, if at all possible. Alternate mowing and rolling.

Fourth, send out the mowers. Start mowing at a higher height and ease the height down over several weeks. Mow only as the grass grows. Rely on rolling to get the greens firm, smooth and fast. Or at least fast by spring standards.

Lastly, don't force leaf growth by over-fertilizing with nitrogen. Apply minimal nitrogen in early spring, no more than 0.25 lbs. nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. The turfgrass will green up and

recover on its own using stored energy from last fall's fertilization.

Q What are your thoughts on annual bluegrass management or control in early spring?

For those who choose to suppress annual bluegrass seedheads, timing of application of Proxy (ethephon) or Embark (mefluidide) is everything.

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AARON PATTON, PH.D.

An effective approach to determine ideal application timing is to monitor growing degree days (GDD), and once GDD accumulation has reached a defined range, apply your favorite seedhead suppressing PGR. This approach is used in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, where GDD accumulation is reported daily on a website starting March 1. The website can be found at

<http://www.gddtracker.net/>. It's helpful in determining the timing of Proxy and Embark applications.

If you choose to control annual bluegrass, don't forget to keep your focus on creeping bentgrass health in early spring and don't be overly aggressive with your annual bluegrass control program.

Q What can be done in the fall to set up greens that perform well in early spring?

Fertilize with 1.0 lb. nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. in fall (one or more applications depending on your nitrogen source) so the plants can store energy for the spring. If you are so inclined, raise the mowing height slightly so there is more leaf area to photosynthesize and produce carbohydrates.

And consider topdressing late in fall once you have stopped mowing. The topdressing will help protect the crown, reduce desiccation injury and get the turfgrass off to a good start in spring.

Q What are your thoughts on pigments and paints applied in early spring for color and to help warm up the soil?

So far, I haven't seen much use of pigments or paints in Indiana in early spring. Superintendents are interested, but few have tried them yet. I understand the theory behind their use at certain timings but I have not seen any research that leads me to believe that there is a significant benefit to their use in spring on cool-season turf.

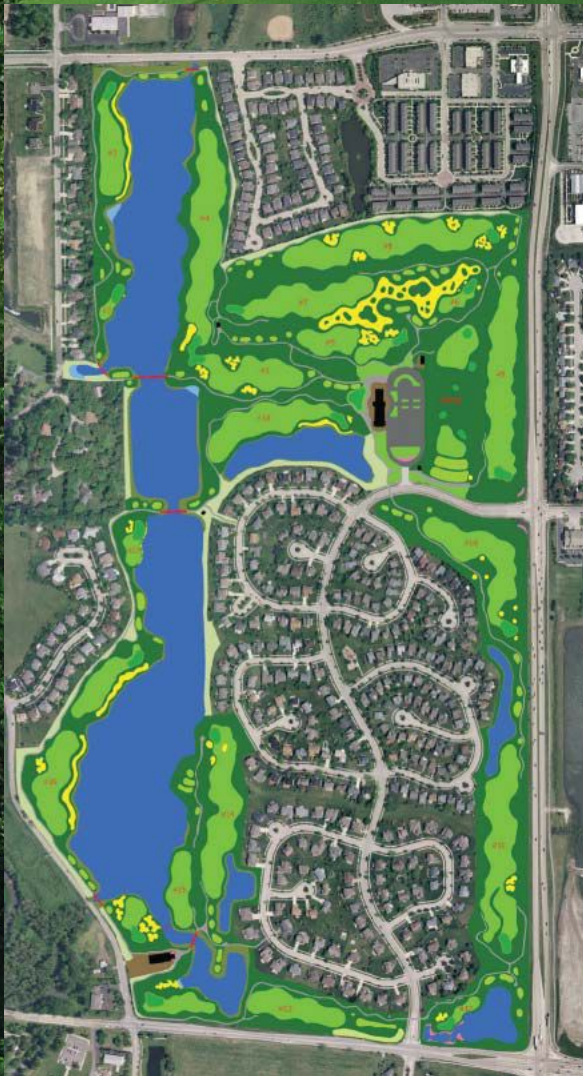


Clark Throssell, Ph.D., loves to talk turf. Contact him at clarkthrossell@bresnan.net.



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Weevil Defense

Superintendents have a valuable resource when it comes to fighting annual bluegrass weevils — Weevil Trak 2013, now from **SYNGENTA**. Making proper decisions on the timing of treatments early in the season is key to having a successful annual bluegrass weevil control program. WeevilTrak alerts users on the optimum time to control weevils. Syngenta is working with 39 superintendents and seven independent university researchers, including Weevil Trak Managing Consultant Dr. Daniel Peck, who is making treatment recommendations.

Greencastonline.com/weeviltrak/home.aspx

Nematode control

AGRIGUARD COMPANY announced that MultiGuard Protect, a natural contact nematode known for its nematode control in established turf, now has an expanded-use label approved for outdoor non-food use to control harmful nematodes on plants and ornamentals. MultiGuard Protect controls root-infesting, plant-parasitic nematodes and suppresses fungal plant diseases, such as species of Pythium, Phytophthora, Fusarium and Rhizoctonia, stimulating overall aesthetic improvement and increasing root depth by up to four inches on the affected turf without harming it.

MultiGuardProtect.com

Battery technology

TROJAN BATTERY COMPANY has two new batteries that feature the longest life and longest range in the industry, the company says. Trojan has engineered the Traveler 8V to provide more than 40 percent longer life, and the Ranger 160 to deliver 35 percent more travel distance between recharges than today's current 8-volt golf batteries. The battery's internal elements include Trojan's new Internal Battery Protection System, which features thicker grids, membrane-wrapped plates, and Trojan's exclusive T2 Technology with Maxguard T2 multi-rib separators.

Trojanbattery.com



Seeding

TURFCO introduces the new TriWave 40 Tow-Behind Overseeder. The towable model offers the most speed and versatility and the easiest operation of any overseeder on the market, the company says. The TriWave 40 quickly attaches to most turf vehicles, making it convenient and efficient to use. In minutes the seeder can be hooked up, eliminating the typical hassle associated with setting up a seeder. Once ready, the TriWave 40 can overseed and spot-seed a variety of turf areas, including greens, fairways, roughs, tee boxes and driving ranges, with any seed and no gear or mechanical changes. The versatility of the towable TriWave 40 enables crews to seed more often and tackle any area on the golf course. Additionally, the TriWave can be quickly adjusted without any tools to get the right depth for any turf conditions.

Turfco.com

Irrigation

HUNTER INDUSTRIES says its G885 golf rotor has the highest torque output of any golf rotor on the market, with a patented

gear drive capable of pushing away most obstructions. The G885 comes with convenient serviceability and Decoder-In Head technology, making it a powerful and intelligent rotor. A ratcheting stainless steel riser, water-lubricated gear drive, QuickSet-360 arc mechanism and QuickCheck arc mechanism are all added strengths of the rotor. The G885 is recommended for new constructions, retrofits and system upgrades.

Hunterindustries.com



Sun protection

TURF MAX introduces two new products to the Turf Screen enhanced solar protection line. They are Turf Screen Pure Green advanced green pigment for turf and Turf Screen Crew outdoor professional sunscreen for staff. Turf Screen Pure Green is a blend of dark green pigment for turf that is formulated specifically to improve turf quality and provide long-lasting color during the spring and summer months. Turf Screen Crew is a broad spectrum SPF 30 professional-grade sunscreen specifically designed to protect golf course employees from the harmful effects of excessive exposure to UVB and solar radiation. It is water-resistant, greaseless and fragrance-free.

Turfscreen.com

The 19th Hole



Troy Flanagan

SUPERINTENDENT // Anthem CC, Henderson, Nev.



What can I get you? A Sailor Jerry and Coke.

Troy, it's on me, I'll spring for the Captain... My boss laughs because he buys alcohol for everyone for Christmas. He says he feels bad because he buys me this big jug of Sailor Jerry and it's only \$18. It's just different, I like it.

Tell me about your family. My wife, Mary, we've been married 16 years. She's always understood the industry. If it's July 4th, she knows I'm gone and she's OK with that. She's really the glue that holds the family together. My son Ryan (14) is going to be a video game tester someday. My daughter Erin (12) is an amazing dancer, she dances competitively.

Do you play video games with Ryan? The last couple years he's gotten too good, so I've stopped. He loves Call of Duty: Black Ops. We'd play online, I'd get slaughtered, and I just knew there's some snot-nosed 9-year-old on the other side. So I told him, "I'm done."

Everyone gripes about golfers, but let me ask you this: What do golfers get right? Golfers are doing a better job understanding that something needs to be done about the length of the golf courses and how long it takes to play. I think "Play it Forward" has been a good push, and it's going to be good for our industry. I hope that push keeps going.

What do you look forward to in the summer? The arrival of fall. I've grown to not like summers. I'm in the desert, it's really hot. The toughest thing about Anthem is our soils are horrible, we've got some of the worst water in the country, and I have pretty much all ryegrass here. I'm keeping ryegrass alive in 110-, 112-degree weather. From May through August, every Saturday and Sunday, there are two of us here cooling the ryegrass every afternoon. I've got two great assistants, Miles Carlson and Kenton Gamache. Between the three of us we get it done.

Is it a lot of fun living in Las Vegas, or does it get old? You know, everyone thinks we all live down at the strip. Vegas has gotten bigger, but it's still not a big town. We live in a really nice community away from all the strip activity. It's definitely different. Las Vegas is more homey than where I used to live in Northern California.

Who is your team? I've been a Vikings fan forever. It seems they're always above average. There's always a great chance they'll make the playoffs. ...But there's an even greater chance they'll lose in the first round of the wildcard.

Do you ever put money down on your Vikings at the sports book? I'm not a sports book guy. I don't bet on sports. Honestly, I like my money. Vegas wasn't built on winners.

As interviewed by Seth Jones on March 26th, 2013.



"I'VE WORKED FOR SIX DIFFERENT SUPERINTENDENTS, ALL PENN STATERS. EVERY ONE OF THEM WERE AMAZING SUPERINTENDENTS. THEY WERE THE ONES WHO MADE ME THE SUPERINTENDENT I AM TODAY."



These conversations are happening around the country as more and more golf courses experience the performance and quality-of-cut of Jacobsen mowers. Whether it's the ECLIPSE® series of greens mowers with adjustable frequency-of-clip settings and 15-blade reels, the surprisingly affordable LF510™ fairway mower, or the AR-522™ rough mower with TrimTek™ decks, Jacobsen mowers will get your course talking – and texting. For more information about Jacobsen or to find a Jacobsen dealer near you, visit jacobsen.com.



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