

Most of the prizes are acquired through the use of donated Syngenta Green Partner Points. You can easily donate your points to the Wee One Foundation by visiting the Greenpartners website and we sincerely thank those who have.

Another shameless plug is in order for Memorial Bentgrass seed. Five bucks for every 25lb sold is donated to the Wee One. Over \$6,000 has been donated over the past two years.

Industry support and golf outings are great but we really need sustaining annual individual memberships to be our #1 source of income.

The Wee One Foundation has 370 members but frankly membership growth has been somewhat stagnant. Annual dues are \$75. For your donation you get our thanks and the knowledge you a part of something very special.

I would like to thank everyone who is a member of The Wee One. Tangible membership benefits are few. The Wee One pin is only a token of the good that the group does.


The Board of Directors of the Wee One Foundation is made up of Danny Quast, President - Rod Johnson as VP - Chad Ball, Conway Farms in Lake Forest, IL as secretary- and Pat Sisk, Milwaukee CC as Treasurer. Directors are Mike Handrich and Bruce Worzella, in Wisconsin and Paul Bastron, Mark Petitque, and Dave Radaj of in Illinois. Be assured that we appreciate and do not take for granted the trust that has been placed "to do the right things".

The fast track of the Wee One Foundation has not been without the normal growing pains of a group of volunteers who have jobs with heavy work loads. To that matter we are pleased that we have enlisted the services of Luke Cella to help us with the administration of the foundation. Luke is the Executive Director of the Midwest Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Illinois Turf Foundation. Luke is a great fit for us bringing exceptional organizational and administrative skills.

The Wee One Board struggles as to why the membership roster is stagnant.

If we have communicated poorly I apologize. I am confident we are going to step-up communication with the addition of Luke. Opportunities like The Grass Roots can only help.

If you have received information and not joined or sustained membership because of neglect or simple procrastination there is no need to apologize, just join or rejoin. If you chose not to be a member for what ever reason we respect that choice.

If you need more information visit Weeone.org. A membership application is available at the website. 

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Managing Ants: Is it Even Possible?

Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Ants can be quite problematic and disruptive pests on golf courses, especially in high-profile areas such as putting greens, tees and fairways. In addition, due to the increased use of sand-based soil mixes used to construct putting greens and tees, evidence suggests that ants are a growing problem. This does not go without saying that ants are not common in fairways or roughs where native soils are prevalent. Worker ants are responsible for excavating underground nest chambers, consequently pushing up soil that creates “volcano-shaped” mounds. These mounds, typically 2 - 4 inches in diameter, not only do they disrupt the smoothness and uniformity of putting green surfaces, but they also smother patches of turf as well as dull mower blades. Thus, golf course superintendents often make surface applications of fast-acting (quick knock-down) conventional insecticides to eliminate the nuisance ants that create the unwanted mounds.

The ants typically found in turf on golf courses is commonly referred to as the “turfgrass ant” (although not an officially recognized common name by the Entomological Society of America) are actually the cornfield ant (*Lasius neoniger*). It is a native ant that occurs throughout the United States and Canada. This ant species is a social insect that lives in colonies that are comprised of thousands of sterile female workers, and typically only one reproductive queen. An individual ant nest is commonly comprised of multiple interconnected chambers approximately 10 - 15 inches deep. Each passage to the surface is capped with a mound. Depending on the time of year (i.e., spring vs. summer), there can be a considerable variation in the number of ant mounds per nest, ranging from 2 - more than 10. Generally, the number of ant mounds steadily increases from early spring to late summer as the colony grows. Previously conducted research has revealed that as food resources become more abundant in the spring, the queen steadily increases egg production. However, once this peak production occurs, the offspring from this brood develop relatively slowly, starting in May and continuing into July. Soon thereafter, new adult workers (all females) begin to emerge, after which mound-building activities dramatically escalate. Finally, as ant colonies begin to mature by late-summer and even into early-autumn (late-August



Ant mounds on short cut turf cause aesthetic, playability and mowing problems.

- October), a sizable portion of the colony develops into winged reproductives (swarmers) consisting of new queens and drones.

Once the colony reaches this stage, typically in the late-afternoons, on warm days, new queens and drones typically swarm by the thousands. This event is especially common after rains and thunderstorms. During this swarming process, the new queens and drones partake in a nuptial flight whereby they mate while flying. Soon thereafter, queens seek-out new locations to build chambers. However, before constructing a new chamber, new queens chew-off their wings. Oddly enough, most queens die before making a chamber, however those that do survive typically construct a small chamber in the soil beneath the turf, often creating a small mound of soil approximately 3/8 - 1/2 inch in diameter. Surviving queens typically lay a relatively small number of eggs in the chamber. Within several weeks (< 6), new worker ants (typically about 1/2 the size of normal workers) break open the chamber to forage for food. At this point, colony activity ceases as winter weather prevails. For the colonies that endure and survive the winter, they typically resume activity in the spring as temperatures are favorable and food sources become available.

Based on previous research findings, it is widely understood that each nest has only one queen, thus the future of the colony is dependent on her. This is not to downplay the importance of workers, they serve a crucial role by both defending (protecting) and foraging for food for the colony. As far as the types of foods that ant species feed-on, respective ant species have various or different food preferences. *Lasius* ants appear


to like foods that contain the three primary nutritional components: protein, carbohydrate (sugar), and fat rich foods. In turf, they commonly forage on the surface for small insects and insect eggs, however they also are known to tend (protect) subterranean root aphids in order to obtain the sugary honeydew that the aphids produce. Because these mound-building ants are important predators of the eggs and small larvae of sod webworms, white grubs, and other insect pests, they are also considered beneficial insects.

Management Options


Unfortunately, ant control often is not simple; in fact it can be quite difficult, especially at different times during the growing season. Because throughout much of the growing season, the queen ant, with her eggs and larvae (young) are located underground in nests, surface applications of contact insecticides merely only control workers on the turf surface. So, unless the queen is eliminated, more worker ants will continue to be produced. Currently, there are three different recommended approaches for managing mound-building ants: 1) insecticide treatment applications, in the spring when ant mound first appear, with relatively short-residual, contact insecticides such as bifenthrin (Talstar), chlorpyrifos (Dursban Pro), and cyfluthrin (Tempo), deltamethrin (DeltaGard), and lambda-cyhalothrin (Scimitar) may provide up to 4 - 6 weeks of control, 2) applications of long-residual insecticides such as thiamethoxam (Meridian), Arena (clothianadin) or Chipco TopChoice, currently registered in most but not all northern states) and imidacloprid (Merit) may potentially provide several weeks (8-12 weeks) control when applied to mounds as they first appear, or 3) granular ant baits such as Advanced Granular Carpenter Ant Bait (abamectin), Maxforce (hydromethylnon), and Firestar (fipronil) may provide 2 - 3 weeks of control. However, because ants are quite sensitive to the quality (freshness) of the bait, it is understood that moisture renders most baits unattrac-

tive, likely due to staleness. Therefore, it is critical to apply baits to dry turf; avoid applications prior to anticipated rainfall events and be sure to withhold irrigation for approximately 48 hours.

To further complicate the rather difficult challenge of controlling mound-building ants, during the late-summer and early-autumn months, as described earlier, ants have a distinctively different behavior. During this time, large numbers of swarmer emerge from their nests in the late afternoon. In this situation, the most effect management approach would be to apply a surface applied, contact insecticide such as bifenthrin (Talstar), chlorpyrifos (Dursban Pro), cyfluthrin (Tempo), deltamethrin (DeltaGard), or lambda-cyhalothrin (Scimitar) to the turf surface with intention of controlling the swarming ants before they have an opportunity to mate and construct new chambers.

Due to the variation in behavior of mound-building ants within a growing season, it is critical that a comprehensive understanding of the behavior and habits of a pest organism is essential in order to achieve effectively management. Therefore, additional research is needed to better understand the biology of mound-building ants in order to further develop and refine management strategies and tactics. 

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Pace of Play, No Easy Answers

By **David Brandenburg**, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

It is not a secret that our busy lives are becoming a problem for the golf industry. In our rush culture not only do we not want to spend 6 hours doing the same activity we just do not have that amount of time to spend out on the links.

There are unlimited opportunities for our children, grandchildren or even us to be involved in extra curricular items. It is not a complaint because we enjoy these times with family and friends and hobbies but they all take time from the game of golf.

At the same time with our current economic challenges, many business owners and workers are spending more time bringing home a paycheck. In times of budget cuts businesses attempt to do the same work or even more with less employees and that often leads to extra hours at work.

I have heard a number of speakers over the past five years say time, not price is the biggest challenge the golf industry faces today. Price cuts do not give us more time.

The dreaded five hour 18 hole round becomes six or seven hours when you add travel to and from the course, warm up time and a little post round camaraderie after the game. A five hour round is slow, but I have played in a couple WGCSA events that I wished had taken five hours because it was more like five and half hours before we were done. If we as members of the golf industry cannot play in four to four and half hours how can we expect our customers to?

Often the task of speeding up



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play is left up to the golf marshal or ranger. This is one position on the golf course staff that has a difficult diplomatic responsibility even though it looks like they just drive around hawking golf balls all day. I know this because one, I have seven of them who work for me and two; I have pulled enough shifts on the ranger cart to know the truth. No not the truth about where the best ball hawking territory on the back nine is but the truth that in many cases there is not a dang thing you can do about slow play after it starts without offending someone. Even with the advanced title of Players Assistant, the ranger cannot perform miracles when the group that teed off at 8 am is just making the turn at 11.

The battle against slow play starts with course design or layout includes some course maintenance strategies, proper starting techniques and finishes with golfer education. So far that sounds easy, but mix a couple foursomes of high handicap players with a cooler full of adult beverages with three twosomes who like to play alone and fast and your Players Assistant has his work cut out for him.

Course design is an easy topic before construction starts but tough to change after the grand opening. Hindsight is 20/20, so it easy after the bulldozers are gone to say mistakes were made, but then it is to late. Owners and developers need to consider what type of players they want to attract and what kind in reality they will have, when hiring an architect and planning a course.

For the average daily fee club, long forced carries, blind shots or long walks from green to tee should be avoided. It is also important that multiple sets of tees are available to allow players to play a course that suites their game. Mounds and contouring should be gentle enough to allow mowing the rough with large rough mowers at 2.5" or less.

A resort course also needs multiple tees with less hazards in play from the forward tees, but considering most players ride a cart, the distance from tee to green can be increased.

Existing courses have limited options for design changes because the low handicap golfers enjoy the challenges of forced carries or well placed bunkers and are usually not open to filling in hazards. One solution could be to add forward tees or shorten the most used set of tees to allow players to enjoy a course that is suited to their skills. Doing this can take some hazards out of play and provide a better experience.

Pay attention to where your golfers are hitting from or spending time looking for balls. Perhaps a natural area needs to be mowed back or the edge of a woods could be brushed out to allow players to find a ball and chip it back into play fairly easily. They often cannot advance the ball forward or hit a full shot so the penalty of the hazard is intact but play can keep moving.

Maintenance practices can also have an effect on pace of play. Just as in course design operators need to look at what kind of players they have and need to balance a playable course for less skilled golfers and a challenging course for better players. Long primary rough and lost balls are a major factor in pace of play. Superintendents can lower their primary mowing height or add a first cut of rough between the fairway height and primary height to allow for a little more room for error.

If you have the proper soils and turf types, dry fairways play faster than plush fairways. On the other hand, it also allows fades and draws to find the rough, but overall the more the ball can roll the better. This can be challenge for turf managers with heavy soils with poa annua fairways and older irrigation systems during the heat of summer.

Green speed effects pace of play at all course types. Most players say they want fast greens, but depending on the player quality or surface undulations 9 to 10 on the stimpmeter is pretty challenging for the average player. Private clubs where the players have a little more familiarity with those greens can exceed those levels.

Marking of the course and signage is often the responsibility of the maintenance staff. A private club can get by without tee signs or directional signs but daily fee and resort courses need to inform the golfer about where they are and where they are going. Be sure paths to the next tee are well marked, so golfers do not have to consider which way to go next. Provide an overhead shot of the hole on the scorecard or tee sign so unfamiliar players can quickly decide what route to take and what clubs to use.

Complete hazard marking is important for "serious" play but a

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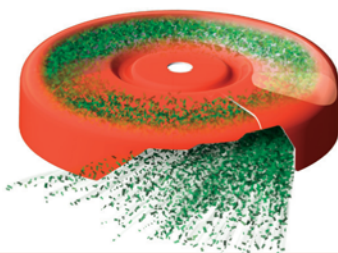
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limited amount of hazard stakes at every level helps in seeing the hazard from the hitting area and locating the ball.

Some courses offer multi-row yardage plates, however for the average player easily seen 100, 150 and 200 yard markers are a necessity. I have found a good combination with tags on our fairway heads for those players who expect that, and domed, mow over yardage plates that can be seen from the rough to give the player a quick estimation of what club to hit.

If the course is well designed, proper signage is in place and the links maintained to the standards set forth by the ownership or membership the only thing left is course rules and golfer education, which go hand in hand.

Communicating with the golfer at check-in is key to a good relationship. It not only makes the golfer feel comfortable at your facility but it allows the golf shop staff to alert them to any changes or unique situations on the course such as the cart policy, or maintenance that might interfere with normal play.

The golf purists will cringe but courses can suggest modified rules such as marked drop zones on holes that have difficult forced carries. A sign at the tee or notice on the scorecard can alert players of this option. Most daily fee and golf league players play distance on "out of bounds" shots rather than going back to the place the ball was hit from.

Playing "winter rules" for casual events and leagues speeds up play and is a common league rule. Our course posts summer and winter rules signs seasonally for those players who play by the rules, but for the recreational player, these rule modifications allows for a more pleasurable round.

Tee time intervals is something busy courses should consider as way to spread the players out,

and in turn reduce log jams on that first short hole. Tee time intervals vary from 7 to 10 minutes at most courses and even stretch up to 12 minutes at resort courses. The interval times are closely tied into revenue and pace of play. The 7 / 8 minute alternate intervals is popular to allow tee times to be the same every hour while starting eight foursomes per hour. At 10 minutes, only six groups can start per hour reducing potential revenue.

However, the 7 / 8 interval start although good for revenue, is bad for pace of play. If the 9 hole pace of play is two hours you have 64 players on 9 holes, and are reaching the max for common golfers all playing their own ball. At the two and a half hour pace of play you have 80 players on your 9 holes and outside of the first group none of them are happy because they are waiting on every shot.

Private and semi-private clubs have more control over players and pace of play enforcement than does a daily fee where the customers come and go. The clubs regular slow players can be coached by management or embarrassed into faster play by other players.

Courses should establish an average pace of play and base enforcement off that. The old adage, keep up with the group in front of you only works if the lead group sets a fast pace. A good easy idea I have read recently is placing a flag on the cart for the group that tees off at the top of every hour. The marshal staff can easily see where those carts are and identify problems early. At minimum, the marshal should have a copy of the tee sheet so they can track players out on the golf course.

The daily fee course or resort course has little option than to have a polite but firm pace of play

policy. Often a golf shop staff will receive as many complaints about slow play as they do rangers rushing golfers on the same day. Golf Rangers should be trained to greet all golfers early in their round to start a relationship with them. This helps later in the round when a group falls behind and needs to be encouraged to pick up the pace.

If a course wants to fix pace of play problems they have to have a policy with teeth without the constant fear of offending slow players. In reality, slow players are ruining the day for all the groups piled up behind them, and should be given a limited amount of courtesy.

It should be clear the key to pace of play is the necessity for golf clubs to decide what type of players or members they want to attract. From that decision course design, maintenance practices, local rules and signage can be planned accordingly. A golf course cannot be all things to all people and should cater to their core group while providing options for the other players. ♣

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January February 1985

Editors Note: A recap of the January February 1985 issue of the Grass Roots. I start with Dr. Cookson's column on The Role of the Greens Committee Chairman which is still as applicable today as it was in 1985. It is printed in its entirety.

Dr. David U Cookson's column "A Players Perspective" was titled The Role of the Green Committee Chairman. Dr. Cookson was starting his 9th year as a Green Committee Chairman at Maple Bluff Country Club.

"Your editor assigned me this topic this month; but in thinking about what I would say and reflecting on experience, it is obvious that a complete summation would include both the ideal and hoped for exemplary role of the Green Committee Chairman, but also recognize the too often opposite example of the Green Chairman who fails to play his role effectively. Both results, success and failure of accomplishment, can best be noted by outlining the Green Chairman's role in golf club interaction.

The fundamental duty of the Green Chairman is to serve as liaison between the club membership and the Green Superintendent. All else is peripheral to this basic obligation. If the Green Chairman fails this role, he fails completely. He succeeds by earning and maintaining the confidence and respect of both the membership and the Board as well as the Green Superintendent. He must be political enough to recognize and deal with the various interest groups within the club, and maintain lines of communication with all, yet tactfully synthesize these concerns in presentations to the Green Superintendent such that advice and counsel is not perceived to be arbitrary and unrealistic. At the same time he must be cognizant of the real needs of the Green Superintendent in performing his job to his best capability, and be prepared to lobby the club membership and Board to support the necessary expenditures and policies to keep the golf course in top condition. Unhappily, this ideal Green Committee chairman is too infrequently found; generally due to either inexperience, lack of interest in or understanding of the position, or commonly a dogmatic and authoritative approach to problems which leaves little room in the mind for breadth of understanding or interest in accommodating diverse points of view. A wise Green Superintendent would spend some effort subtly promoting the concept of the ideal Green Chairman to the club leaders in hope of influencing selection of the appropriate type of individual to this position.

There are of course other important roles for the Green Committee Chairman. He must be knowledgeable

about the best turf conditions for playing golf, and have traveled sufficiently and visited other clubs to have a general appreciation of this subject. This is necessary to be able to convey meaningful suggestions to his Green Superintendent as to whether things are on the right track, and also that the Superintendent will respect the opinions he is hearing. The Green Chairman must play his own course enough so that he is always aware of the current status of its condition. He must educate himself to some understanding of the kinds of grasses and disease processes prevalent on his golf course, as well as acquire knowledge of the usual problems of cultivation and maintenance of turf. Lastly, he must be able to make a decision, and then to take responsibility for those decisions made even if adverse consequences occur, without placing blame on other factors or trying to shift responsibility to the Green Superintendent.

The successful Green Chairman will certainly maintain a close relationship with the Green Superintendent, close enough so that policy questions are clearly understood and acknowledged by both, but not so close as to interfere with day to day management decisions of the Superintendent in relation to his crew, or in the details of precise utilization of fertilizers or pesticides. He will be available; and an individual that the Superintendent will feel comfortable in presenting problems to and recommending solutions, feeling that the Green Chairman will listen fairly and be reasonable in his evaluations.

Finally, I feel the Green Chairman should provide continuity in the ongoing relationship between the club and the Green Superintendent. Every successful and continually smooth interaction involving the club and the Green Superintendent that I have observed has

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also included a Green Chairman providing continuity in service. Short term Green Chairmen lead to inconsistency of direction and disruptive operations and policies, and should be resisted. Clubs which pursue this practice feel they are promoting healthy conditions by bringing in fresh faces to try new approaches; but in fact, there are few members at any club whose talents exist in broad enough measure to be good Green Chairmen, and they should not be wasted once they have undertaken these duties by being too often rotated out and retired.

These then are what appear to me to be essential in the role of the Green Chairman, at least in a good Green Chairman. Most Green Chairman will fall short in some or perhaps most of these attributes, but there are also a number who do successfully combine these qualities into their performance, and serve to show all of us how effective and important a good Green Chairman can be; the club and Green Superintendent who have one of these working right now are fortunate indeed."



The Architects Opinion by Bob Lohmann was titled The Art of Putting Green Design. With 18 approach shots and 36 putts the average golfer spends 75% of their shots on and around the green area.

"Putting greens and the adjacent area form the most important part of the golf course and are often the most costly items to construct and maintain. Because of their importance in both use and development of character, each dollar spent on them is well worth it."

Bob discussed the history, methodology and design characteristics of putting greens and surrounds.



Monroe Millers President Message was a list of Murphy's Laws for Golf Course Superintendents.

Laws of the Golf Course

- The weather is either to hot, to cold, to dry to wet or to good to last.
- Next years weather will be better for us.
- More often than not, bad weather reports will be right and good weather reports will be wrong.
- The Greensaire will always break down with three greens to go. To late to cancel aerifying and with enough left to aggravate play tomorrow.
- The sprayer breaks down when pythium is running wild on your fairways.
- The impeller on the Lely spreader will break when it is full of fertilizer.
- The seeder breaks down the day before a rain, and it will rain right after contact fungicides have been applied.

Budget Laws

- Everything you decide to do on the golf course costs more than first estimated and budgeted. It will also take longer than you planned and more time than you have.
- The cost of fertilizer drops the day after you buy.
- Bentgrass seed will be sold out the day before you order.
- Discrepancies in your budget never will be in your favor.

Shop Laws

- Your distributor's parts department will always lack one part - the one you need.
- The wrong part will come in the right box.
- A machine will break down immediately after the warranty is up.
- Leftover nuts never match leftover bolts.
- You will have every size of bolt in the bin except the size you need.
- The right tool is not ever in the right toolbox.
- If you tinker around with something long enough, it will break or malfunction.
- Anything used or loaded to its full potential or capacity will break.
- If something jams, force it: if it breaks, so what? You needed to replace it anyway.

Laws of Golf Course Management

- The day; no the very minute you lean back to relax is the very time the Club President and the Green Committee Chairman stop by. They also stop on those rare occasions when you are gone - usually only on a parts run.
- Precise, conscientious planning and minute attention to detail will never succeed like blind dumb luck.
- A Golf Course Superintendent always thinks next year will be better.
- The first place to look for something is the last place you'd expect to find it.

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