

The West Region Prepares For Summer

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There is no "offseason" in the Southwest. During the winter turf maintenance typically is less intense than during summer due to shorter days, reduced evaporative demand and slowly growing turf. However, winter is the busiest golf season in the Southwest, placing an emphasis on providing premier playing conditions. During summer, golf rounds decrease but the intensity of agronomic practices increases as golf course superintendents and their staffs begin summer projects. A significant shift in management practices occurs as superintendents transition from promoting post-overseeding bermudagrass recovery to reducing thatch and promoting dense, upright turf growth. Excessive lateral growth and a thick layer of thatch create poor playability, especially in nonoverseeded rough areas during winter. Consider these suggestions as you manage bermudagrass tees, approaches, fairways and roughs during peak growing conditions this summer:



Excessive lateral growth of stolons indicates a need for vertical mowing practices.

- Do not be afraid of aggressive cultural practices. Aggressive vertical mowing, flail mowing or spring-tine harrow raking will encourage upright growth.
- Once the bermudagrass is upright, scalp it in a manner similar to traditional overseeding preparations.

- To save time and labor, machines are available that can complete practices such as verticutting or flail mowing while simultaneously removing the debris.
- An alternative strategy that is gaining popularity in the golf industry is [fraise mowing](#). This practice uses a machine that removes thatch and even some of the surface soil depending on its operating depth. Fraise mowing has been effective for thatch removal and for removing weed seeds including *Poa annua*.
- Thatch-reduction practices can be augmented by including core- or solid-tine aeration to reduce compaction and improve water penetration and retention.

Aggressive cultural practices during summer will cause temporary disruptions to play but the result will be healthier turf, a better playing surface and easier preparation for overseeding. For specific programs tailored to your course and conditions, please contact the [USGA Green Section](#).

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