

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

November 15, 2019



*Replacing *Poa annua* contaminated turf in collars and approaches with clean sod helps discourage *Poa annua* from infiltrating bentgrass greens. (Courtesy Clint Luedtke)*

CLEAN THE RING AROUND THE GREEN

BY BRIAN WHITLARK | AGRONOMIST, WEST REGION

Golf courses located in cool growing environments favorable for annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) growth must use multiple strategies if they want to discourage this grass from infiltrating bentgrass putting greens. One proven tactic is to physically remove contaminated turf surrounding the greens.

The Martis Camp Club in Truckee, California, has been “cleaning” rings of turf surrounding their creeping bentgrass putting greens for several years. Martis Camp has focused on the closely mown collars and approaches, where there is the worst *Poa annua* contamination. This update will highlight the process employed by superintendent Clint Luedtke and his team.

The process begins by stripping the *Poa annua* contaminated turf with a walk-behind sod cutter. The depth is set to match the replacement turf purchased from the sod farm. A shallow organic mat layer remains after sod removal, therefore the stripped area is aerated three times with 5/8-inch outside diameter tines on a 2-inch by 2-inch spacing. The staff removes the cores and applies a shallow sand layer to smooth the

surface. This process offers a nice opportunity to smooth the collar area and remove raised areas that trap water on the greens. This process is completed in the fall following course closure, which minimizes any disruption to golfers. An organic fertilizer is applied to the prepared area and Kentucky bluegrass sod is laid, watered and rolled to smooth out the sod and encourage rooting. Finally, sand is applied on top of the new sod to smooth the surface and protect the turf in advance of cold winter weather.



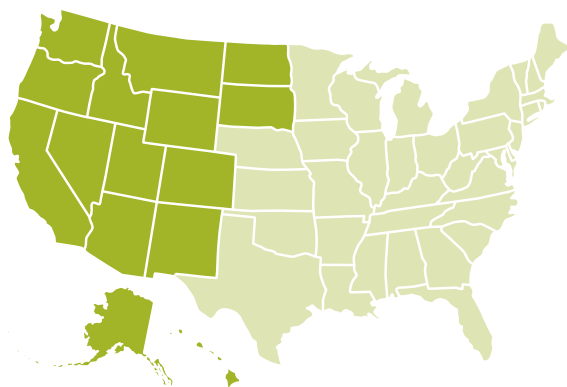
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Courses with abbreviated, cool-weather growing seasons such as the Martis Camp Club cannot rely on chemicals to thwart *Poa annua*. Mechanically removing the contaminated turf surrounding the most important area of the golf course – the putting greens – is the only way to clean the ring around the greens and discourage *Poa* from infiltrating the putting greens.

Best wishes during the winter season and please do not hesitate to contact your [regional USGA agronomist](#) for more information on these strategies or any other agronomic practices.

Thank you to Martis Camp superintendent Clint Luedtke for contributing to this update.



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