

## CONVERTING TO NEW TURFGRASSES IS AN OPPORTUNITY REGRASSING FAIRWAYS



Do not cut corners on aggressive cultivation. It is essential to create a good seedbed for a successful bentgrass grow-in.

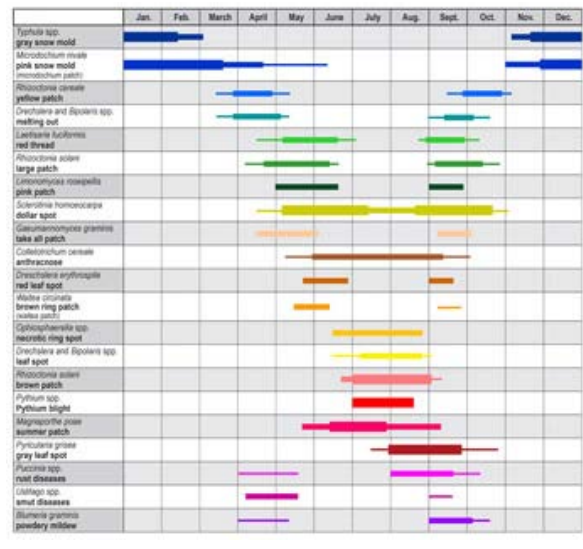
Millions of dollars have been invested in developing new and improved turfgrasses for the game of golf, and golf facilities and golfers the world over have benefited tremendously as a result. Homeowners and many other sports enthusiasts have also benefited, as turf varieties developed with USGA funding are found on home lawns and sports fields all over the globe. A wide variety of different criteria are utilized in the selection process, and new turfgrasses have many desirable traits. The truth is that some of these new grasses feature major improvements over varieties and cultivars that were available just 10 to 20 years ago. What kind of improvements? For starters, reduced water consumption, increased wear tolerance, deeper rooting, finer texture, more upright growth habit, increased tolerance of environmental stress and greater resistance to key fungal diseases. For golfers, converting to these improved grasses can translate to better turf and playability. For golf facilities and turf managers, better turf is of course of great interest as well, but even more so because new, improved turfgrasses often require fewer resources and pave the way for considerable long-term savings.

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## ALL THINGS CONSIDERED - A USGA STAFF OPINION

### DOLLAR SPOT - AN APPROPRIATE NAME FOR A COSTLY, NUISANCE DISEASE



Dollar spot (caused by the fungus *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa* F.T. Bennett) is a very common disease on golf courses, especially those with creeping bentgrass or *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass). It was originally named more than 70 years ago because infected turf resembled silver dollars. At present, dollar spot is a perfect name because it is expensive to control on fairways. Budget constraints are an increasing concern for many golf facilities and fewer fungicide inputs to control dollar spot present a great cost saving opportunity for golf courses without significantly impacting playability.

Dollar spot can develop on golf courses in the Midwestern and Northeastern U.S. for most of the growing season, while many other diseases are found under more specific environmental conditions as illustrated by Figure 1. The long duration of seasonal activity requires superintendents to budget dollar spot prevention programs accordingly, with many making 5 to 10 (or even more) applications per year on fairways. The number of applications made to prevent this disease on fairways depends on many factors;

however, the amount of disease occurrence that is acceptable at your golf facility is the driving force in most cases. Dollar spot control with cultural and chemical inputs is never perfect and some amount of disease breakthrough on fairways is likely each year despite regular use of preventative inputs. How much dollar spot is acceptable at your golf facility? This is a question that should be asked.

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**FORE THE GOLFER**

**CREATING A SHORT COURSE**

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There's a short course within your golf course that may be perfect for youth, beginners and shorter hitters.

**RESEARCH THAT MATTERS**

**PREVENT PHOSPHORUS FROM LEAVING THE GOLF COURSE**

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Best management practices (BMP's) to keep phosphorous in its place.

**FROM THE ARCHIVES**

**INEXPENSIVE GOLF**

MAY, 1922

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It is the time of the year when many course managers and superintendents begin preparing their 2014 maintenance budgets. Spouses and friends will undoubtedly notice a trend to the grumpy side as line items are cut, equipment purchases eliminated, and the goal of doing more with less proves as elusive as turning lead into gold. It might help a little to know that this is not a new problem. It could also be worse. Imagine a line item in your budget for a maintenance crew of one, who must also provide his own horse. So before you pull your hair out over your budget for 2014, take a couple of minutes to read a short article about preparing maintenance budgets in 1922. The laugh will do you good.

## REGIONAL UPDATES

**REGIONAL UPDATES**

The USGA Green Section is broken into eight regions with each staffed by Green Section agronomists who work with golf facilities on care of the golf course. Every two weeks USGA agronomists provide updates outlining current issues of what they are observing in the field. Be sure to view updates from other regions and not just your own because featured ideas, techniques and solutions to problems often apply to other parts of the country.

**NORTHEAST REGION**

In the Northeast and across most of the northern part of the country, September is a great month for golf course maintenance. Cooler weather stimulates grass recovery from the summer stress and it allows for the maintenance staff to perform crucial management practices such as core aeration, topdressing, and verticutting.

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**MID-ATLANTIC REGION**

Labor Day has passed and now is the time to control grassy weeds and annual bluegrass weevils so they don't strengthen in numbers next year. Plus, cold-tolerant bermudagrasses performed admirably this year. Is it time to convert?

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**SOUTHEAST REGION**

Senior agronomist Chris Hartwiger shares his observations on the performance of bentgrass greens this summer in the Southeast. Fans earned their keep, plant protectants dialed too, and performing core aeration soon will lead to a great fall golf season.

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**FLORIDA REGION**

Rain has limited play and interfered with maintenance activities on Florida golf courses this summer. Currently, golf facilities are busy trying to finish late-summer cultivation practices. Should rainy weather and cloudy skies continue to slow bermudagrass recovery, extra patience from golfers will be needed.

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**NORTH-CENTRAL REGION**

Is improper sand depth the reason for poor bunker performance at your golf facilities? Shallow sand depths cause many problems in bunkers, including poor playability, inconsistent drainage and even algae growth.

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**MID-CENTRUM REGION**

Another summer of extremes was experienced this year in the Mid-Continent Region, only this time it involved milder temperatures and flooding in some areas. Preemergent applications for *Poa annua* control should wait no longer and next up...conference season.

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**NORTHWEST REGION**

Three golf facilities in the Pacific Northwest are turning the catchphrase term "sustainability" into reality. Here's what we can learn from them.

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**SOUTHWEST REGION**

Severe thunderstorms can cause hundreds of thousands of dollars to golf facilities. Are you prepared if damage occurs? Read on for tips to create a plan and be protected before a destructive storm strikes.

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