



CHIPS & PUTTS

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October Meeting and Annual Election

Glenmaura National Golf Club
Jeff Koch, GCS

Glenmaura National Golf Club will be the host for the final meeting of the 2009 golf season. This meeting will also be our Annual Meeting and Election Meeting. Attendance this year has been great thus far, and this gathering should also be another good one.

Jeff Koch will be our meeting host. Jeff has been superintendent at Glenmaura National since October 2004. Prior to Glenmaura Jeff held the position of golf course superintendent at Wyoming Valley Country Club from July 2000 until taking the reins at Glenmaura National. Jeff also worked at Glenmaura as an assistant from 1998 to 2000 and before that was at Talbot Country Club in Maryland.

Jeff is assisted by Lester Lear and Jack Rude, both graduates of Penn State University. Lester worked previously at Wyoming Valley Country Club and at Aronimink Country Club. Jack began his career out of school right here at Glenmaura National Golf Club.

Glenmaura National was designed by Dr. Michael Hurdzan and Dana Fry. The club was opened in 1993. The course is 6990 yards and plays to a Par 71. The course rating is 75.4 and slope is 149.

Jeff and the staff are currently working on cart path installations, tee and bunker renovations, and rough renovations. They have completed the renovation of green and tee irrigation and installed new controllers to accommodate the additional heads. Both Eagle Irrigation and the Glenmaura staff were used to do this work.

Glenmaura National is laid out on a 150 acre site with 4 ¼ acres of greens, 4 acres of tees, 30 acres of fairways, 30 acres of maintained rough and the rest of the area comprised of low maintenance fescue areas. The operation is run out of a 2500 square foot maintenance facility located at one end of the property. Another interesting fact about Glenmaura National is that the water for the irrigation system comes from a lake above the property and the elevation difference allows for irrigation using only gravity to supply the required pressure without the need for a pump station.

After golf we will hold our annual elections for the PTGA Board of Directors. This is a great way to see
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President's Message.....

I would like to thank Scott Schukraft and Mark McCormick for hosting the September meeting at Huntsville. 90 players is the most I can remember at a meeting other than a clam bake. It was a terrific day, and hopefully, we can find our way back for another meeting.

Congratulations to the MET teams, I heard they finished in the middle of the pack. At least they weren't last. Also, the PTGA sponsored a foursome for the outing at Lehigh C.C. to benefit Ed Zimmerman and his family. The day was successful in raising a substantial amount for Ed and his family.

Jeff Koch will be hosting the October meeting at Glenmaura National on the 15th. It is the annual election meeting. If anyone is interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please contact a Board member. Hope to see you there.

Darrin Larkin

Editor's Notes.....

Well, our last regularly scheduled golf meeting is here and this means our annual elections are coming up. I would like to thank Darrin Larkin for his service these past two years as president and wish him a great deal of success on the lecture circuit. I don't think he will pull down what Clinton does, or maybe he will if we can get him drunk enough?

Should you like to get on the Board there are always spots open on various committees to slowly get your feet wet. The Board can never have too much help and your involvement allows us the opportunity to better grasp the needs of the membership. As an FYI, a bulk of the meetings for the Board take place in the winter when things are slow so you shouldn't worry about not having enough time to give to the Association. Any in season work can be done via email or phone. So come on out and join the Association.

Good luck this fall as the weather has already shown signs of winter. Hopefully, those aerating late will get good healing and the winter weather won't come on too strong. Enjoy the holidays that are coming up and begin those family times with good health.

Jim Gurzler



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that the association is working for you and your needs. If you would like to be on the Board speak to our outgoing president Darin Larkin and make your interest known. It is a great way to give back to the Association. Support the Association and join the Board, or serve on a committee.

This month, Grass Roots will be our meeting sponsor. Thanks to Steve Chirip of Grass Roots and Kevin Collins of Aquatrols for helping out. Thanks also to Jeff and the staff at Glenmaura National Golf Club for hosting the Pocono Turfgrass Association once again.



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Suppressing Earthworm Casting

James A. Murphy, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management &
Bradley S. Park, Sports Turf Education and Research Coordinator

Introduction

The last month of summer typically brings cooler weather and a steady increase in soil water reserves, which can ease irrigation demands and improve the vigor of golf course turfs. Unfortunately for some, these environmental conditions can also signal the return of very active earthworm casting.

Earthworms can be found throughout world; however, few people realize that many species of earthworms were introduced in many places around the globe including North America. Some research studies have evaluated the activity of earthworms introduced into forest ecosystems for potentially harmful effects.

Earthworms are typically active in the upper soil layer when the weather is cool and moist and some species will emerge from burrows to feed on surface organic matter. The organic matter and soil ingested by earthworms is mixed during digestion and then excreted as castings. Some earthworm species will cast within the soil and rarely present a problem on golf course turfs. However, other species cast on the surface. In some soils, earthworm castings make up as much as 50% of the soil aggregates. Earthworms will move deeper into the soil during dry periods but will emerge from the soil when burrows are flooded by rains.

Species that cast on the soil surface can deposit up to ¼ inch of enriched topsoil per year. The beneficial effects of castings include improved nutrient availability, soil aeration, and drainage, breakdown of thatch, and stimulation of microbial activity. The negative effects of castings on golf course turfs include dulling of mowers and the smothering grass, which decreases uniformity and playability of turf. Earthworm castings are also ideal seedbeds for the germination of weed seeds. Earthworms are also a food source for moles, skunks and other animals that dig while foraging for earthworms.

Earthworm Species on Golf Courses

Our survey of earthworm species on seven golf courses in New Jersey and New York collected 1,514 earthworms representing 8 species. Nearly one-half (48%) of the earthworms collected were the species, *Lumbricus terrestris*, also known as the night crawler. This species is well known for creating deep, vertical burrows. These burrows are typically covered by mid-dens (casts). Other earthworm species capable of casting at the soil surface were found in our survey

but none represented more than 15% of the total population surveyed. Thus, *Lumbricus terrestris* is very likely the major earthworm species causing castings problems on golf courses in the NJ/NY metropolitan area.

Management Effects on Earthworm Casting

We have conducted management trials on two golf courses in the metropolitan area (Knollwood Country Club and Meadow Brook Hunt Club). These trials evaluated the effect of several management practices on casting activity including fertilizer type, liming, acidification with sulfur, sand topdressing, and the combination of sulfur application and sand topdressing. At the initiation of trials, earthworm casting was very active at Knollwood Country Club (KCC); whereas, casting had been a problem but was currently limited at Meadow Brook Hunt Club (MBHC).

We evaluated a number of fertilizers sources that included the general types of i) natural organic, ii) synthetic slowly available and iii) synthetic water soluble. Three fertilizer sources of each type were used in the trials. The fertilizer effect on casting appeared to be related to the initial level of casting at the trial site. At MBHC, where casting was initially very low, a fertilizer effect was not evident until the third season of the trial when organic fertilizers doubled the number of castings compared to either synthetic type of fertilizer. No consistent differences in casting among fertilizer types were found at KCC where casting was very active at the start of the trial. Thus, fertilizer type may be more important on sites where casting is not already high but there exists the potential for casting to increase (that is, earthworms are present but casting activity is low).

Liming produced a very small increase in castings in the trial at MBHC but the increase was so small that it probably would not be detectable by a superintendent or golfer. Liming had no effect on casting at KCC where casting was already very active. Thus, stimulation of casting may be more likely with the use of organic fertilizer than liming.

Not surprisingly, topdressing had no effect on casting at MBHC where casting activity was already very low. However, earthworm casting was reduced by as much as 50% after three seasons of topdressing at KCC where casting was very active.

Applications of elemental sulfur produced the most rapid and dramatic effect of all treatments, reducing earthworm casting within the first season of

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Results from Huntsville Golf Club

Our September meeting was a tremendous success! Thanks to Scott Schukraft and Mark McCormick for treating us to this great Rees Jones design. The day was wonderful from the lunch to the dessert and the golf in between.

We had a greater attendance at Huntsville than we did at this year's clambake which in and of itself should show the respect our Association has for this great golf course. Thanks to Mark Kuhns, Director of Grounds at Baltusrol Golf Club and our current GCSAA president for making the trip out to speak to our Association about the state of GCSAA and what services GCSAA offers beyond those seen in the forefront.

All scoring was done using the Stableford System. This month we had our prizes broken down into Member and Guest classes. The following results were:

Guest:

First Place	Warren Savini with a 64
Second Place	Tom Collum with a 58

Member:

First Place	Chris Butler with a 63
Second Place	Steve Chirip with a 57
Third Place	Jerry Decker with a 56
Fourth Place	Ian Kunesch with a 54

Skill Prizes were awarded as follows:

Long Drive	Chris Butler
Closest to the Pin #3	Tom Height
Closest to the Pin #5	Chris Butler

Closest to the Pin #15	Ron Wilchak
Closest to the Pin #17	Ian Kunesch

Thanks go to Pocono Manor for being very generous and for bringing up a foursome. Thanks also for those great prizes for our participants. Thanks go out to our meeting sponsors Finch Equipment and John Deere Landscapes for helping with our meeting, as well.





Darin S. Bevard, Senior Director
October 9, 2009

Regional Update



The first prolonged period of cool temperatures has been accompanied with a drier weather pattern. Leaves are falling and are being cleaned-up daily to minimize their impact on playability. Yes, fall is here, and golfers are enjoying some of the best playing conditions they have seen all season. There is still a lot of time to enjoy your favorite course.

One problem that continues to plague golf courses is earthworm casts, especially in fairways. The cooler weather with some timely rainfall has provided ideal conditions for earthworm casting activities. There is little that can be done to reduce casting activities, but maintenance programs can be implemented to reduce the impacts that these casts cause. Mowing fairways when they are dry can reduce the smearing of worm casts and limit the amount of grass that is affected. It also reduces the impacts on mowing quality. In some cases, dragging fairways prior to mowing will help to breakup casts. Remember, if you have a bad earthworm casting problem, slightly increasing nitrogen fertility will increase the grass growth rate allowing better recover. Earthworm activity is a sign of good soil, but it can create problems for maintenance and playability.

In the southern portion of the region, bermudagrass fairway overseeding has begun at the few facilities that still use this practice. Pre-seeding applications of sulfonfyl urea herbicides to control *Poa annua* have been performed or soon will be. Be careful with the timing of these applications. In more than one instance, these herbicides have been tracked onto bentgrass greens with mowers and/or foot traffic. Yellow, thinning turf can cause any superintendent to lose sleep. In most instances, the damage has been superficial, but be sure that these products

have a chance to dry on the turf before they are traversed by maintenance or golfer traffic.

Now is a good time to take a look at tree plantings and their impact on fine turf areas. We often focus on sunlight penetration during the summer months, when in fact, fall and winter sunlight is every bit as important. Often times, poor growing environments compound problems, especially on putting greens. Bad growing environments produce weak turf. These are the first greens to experience mechanical damage and other problems that lead to a decline in playability. During the fall when weather is favorable for recovery, sunlight penetration to these greens is generally worse because of the sun angle that slows recovery. If trees are not removed to improve the growing environment, this cycle will repeat itself to some degree year after year. Evaluate morning shade patterns on greens and consider tree removal for the benefit of the grass that the game is played on. Hopefully, the fall weather continues to be reasonable to maximize golf participation. With the wet spring and summer weather, many golf courses need it!

Always remember, the Mid-Atlantic Region agronomists are part of your agronomic support team. If you have a question or concern, give us a call or send an e-mail. Stan Zontek (szontek@usga.org) and Darin Bevard (dbevard@usga.org) at 610/558-9066 or Keith Happ (khapp@usga.org) at 412/341-5922



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application at both golf courses. Reduced casting from sulfur application was observed throughout all years of both trials and was as great as 97% compared to untreated plots. Unfortunately, the potential to scorch (or burn) turf is the major concern with applications of elemental sulfur (elemental sulfur is a strong acidifying soil amendment). As result, we initiated trials to identify the maximum rate of sulfur that can be applied without risk of scorching the turf. Although still preliminary, we have applied up to 3 pounds elemental sulfur (90% S) per 1000 square feet in a single application during spring or late summer without damaging fairway turf. It is important to mention that we have used either a dispersible micro-granular or wettable powder formulation of elemental sulfur in our trials. We have purposely avoided using a product formulated as large sulfur granules, which will concentrate too much sulfur in one spot and very likely scorch (burn) the low-cut turf around those large granules. Scorch from excess elemental sulfur is slow to develop and takes a while to dissipate, so you want to avoid it.

We have noted an interesting side effect observed in some of the sulfur trials; there was a population shift of the mixed-species fairway turf after elemental sulfur application. Creeping bentgrass popula-

tion increased from 60% on non-sulfur plots to 77 and 83% on plots treated with elemental sulfur at 4.5 and 9.0 pounds per 1000 square feet, respectively, in the trial at KCC. In a trial conducted at Forest Hill Field Club, elemental sulfur applied at 9 pounds per 1000 square feet in March reduced the annual bluegrass population decreased from 51% to 20% by August. It should be noted that turf suffered from scorch at these greater rates of sulfur application in these trials, which would very likely be objectionable to superintendents and golfers. Therefore, further evaluation of elemental sulfur rate effects on scorch and species populations is needed before we can make sound recommendations.

Accordingly, we are interested in speaking with superintendents that may have fairway sites suitable for further evaluations of elemental sulfur application. We are seeking trial areas of approximately 75- by 75-feet that would be reasonably uniform in soil type and exposure. A reasonably uniform distribution of turf species and/or moderate to intense earthworm casting would also be desirable for our studies. Please contact Jim Murphy at murphy@aesop.rutgers.edu or 732-921-1683 if you are interested in discussing an elemental sulfur trial at your golf course.

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The Month of November is upon us and the Holiday Season draws near.
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the Members of the Pocono Turfgrass Association and their Families...

*A Very Happy
Thanksgiving!*



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POCONO ROUNDUP

Condolences

Our condolences to Duane and Mary Schell on the passing of Mary's mother. Duane is superintendent of Blue Ridge Trail and our outgoing Past President.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Derrick Hudson of Bellewood on the birth of his daughter, Cadence Ann. Cadence was born on September 14, weighing 8 lbs., 2 oz. and was 20 inches long. Everyone is doing well.

Congratulations to Eric Reed of Valley Country Club who was awarded a scholarship to attend the Syngenta Business Institute. It is a week long seminar hosted by Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Syngenta awards 25 scholarships per year for this program.

PTGA MEETING SCHEDULE

2009 Golf Schedule

Nov	4	Sporting Clays Pocono Manor
Nov	10-12	Penn State Turf Conference State College, PA
Nov	10-12	GCSANJ Crystal Conference Crystal Springs Resort, Hamburg NJ (6 core and 6 turf credits are available)
Dec	8-10	NJTA Expo Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, NJ
Jan	12-14	Eastern PA Turf Conference Valley Forge PA

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