

# UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION GREEN SECTION EASTERN REGION

NORTHEASTERN DISTRICT  
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
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MID-ATLANTIC DISTRICT  
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BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND



## EASTERN TURFLETTER

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### MORE ABOUT POA ANNUA (ANNUAL BLUEGRASS)

In the September issue of the U.S.G.A. Journal and Turf Management, Dr. Marvin Ferguson, National Research Coordinator for the U.S.G.A. Green Section, submitted a twelve point management program for the control of Poa annua. This program is particularly applicable to the Northeast Region. In fact, everyone interested in fine turf for golf is urged to give some serious thought and study of Dr. Ferguson's suggestions.

Annual bluegrass has been a perpetual problem in this as well as other areas of the country and to quote Dr. Ferguson, "It appears to be unrealistic to anticipate the development of control methods that will operate independently of good management".

We are in complete agreement with the entire program, most of which is applicable during the growing season, and should be considered in maintenance planning for 1960. Is your maintenance program designed for Poa annua, or bentgrass? By pampering Poa are you perpetuating it?

Since we are now in the off-season, with routine maintenance operations at a minimum, it might be considered an appropriate time to undertake to correct some faults which may be contributing to the Poa annua problem.

Good drainage is essential in the control of annual bluegrass. For example, depressions cause constant puddling. These depressions may be lifted, regraded and sodded with bent sod. Mounds and other contours which interfere with good surface drainage might also best be eliminated. Exaggerated contours frequently limit cupping space, which in turn concentrates traffic in specific areas and ultimately produces depressions, and encourages soil compaction inviting Poa annua infestations.



Inadequate sub-drainage may be a contributing factor and tiling of certain areas of a green may alleviate serious problems.

On some greens, collars and aprons may be out of proportion to the size of the putting surface. In some cases the putting surface may be enlarged by reducing the size of the aprons to allow for more cupping space, dispersion of traffic, and surface run-off.

Some greens might be enlarged through minor construction changes without unreasonable strain on the budget. Also to be considered is the present placement of some sandtraps in the greens area. Traps often determine the movement of traffic around greens and heavy traffic areas are a source of invasion for Poa annua. Could therefore some of these walk-off areas be rearranged to disperse traffic and reduce potential areas of soil compaction, drainage, and Poa annua problems.

Apron turf around greens generally suffers to some degree during the summer season, and 1959 was a particularly bad year for aprons. Because of the poor fall season for seed germination, Poa annua may have reinfested aprons in many cases where the seed catch was poor. Where bent sod is available, why not resod collars and aprons to a more desirable turf?

There is reluctance on the part of some to adopt drastic methods which will partially reduce or control Poa annua. They reason that Poa annua will provide a good putting turf in the cool seasons of the year at a time when bent is slow in growing, such as in the Spring of 1959, when Poa annua was a temporary blessing. However, when the going got tough later in the season, troubles with Poa began. To avoid the inevitable, frequent light watering was necessary. Some superintendents reasoned that Poa annua was better than no turf at all and they continued with such methods as would hold the Poa annua; this was expediency to survive one pitfall until a later one developed. In essence they were perpetuating Poa annua by keeping it alive. They reasoned further that learning to live with Poa annua was simpler than drastic control or eradication, a modification of "If you can't lick them join them". This is a middle of the road philosophy which the hazards of growing turfgrass for heavy and constant use impose on the superintendent and one which is frequently adopted as being the least of several evils. In fact, sudden and complete eradication could prove to be undesirable, particularly in highly populated Poa annua turf. A more logical approach would be to increase the bent population to such an extent that the loss of Poa annua would be imperceptible when treated with a herbicide.

The superintendent who can hold the Poa annua while increasing the bent population would seem to be on the right track in preparation for the eventual time of better control with accepted herbicidal treatment. On the other hand, there are circumstances under which it would be desirable to completely replace Poa annua turf (when infestation is heavy) through a "scorched earth" renovation program.

The past thirty years may well be classified as "The Poa annua Period", and during the past ten years Poa annua has invaded greens in an alarming proportion. When the Poa annua population equals or exceeds the bent population on any one green, many complications arise in trying to maintain satisfactory turf where two types of grass exist with widely different cultural requirements. Briefly, the problem becomes one of



attempting to satisfy bent requirements at the expense of Poa annua, but at the same time holding the entire greens turf under control. Completely ignoring the Poa annua requirements could lead to serious difficulties from excessive loss of playable turf.

This is why a transition period is advisable in which time is allowed for the gradual reduction or control of Poa annua to such an extent that a treatment with herbicide or other control media will not result in the loss of an appreciable amount of turf at any one time.

Until such time as the Poa annua population is under reasonable control, no drastic unproven treatments should be attempted. Dr. Ferguson's twelve point program is an excellent one to follow, especially during a transition period in preparation for the eventual development of better controls, operating either with, or independently of present maintenance practices.

#### DATES TO REMEMBER

January 5 - 6	Mid-Atlantic Turfgrass Conference Lord Baltimore Hotel Baltimore, Maryland
January 18 - 21	New Jersey Turfgrass Conference Rutgers University New Brunswick, N. J.
January 29	USGA Green Section Educational Program Biltmore Hotel New York, N. Y.
Jan. 31 - Febr. 5	31st Annual Conference Golf Course Superintendents of America Shamrock Hilton Houston, Texas
February 15 - 18	Penn State Turfgrass Conference Penn State University University Park, Pa.
March 10 - 11	Massachusetts Turfgrass Conference University of Massachusetts Amherst, Mass.

# Eastern Turfletter

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