

**Lower your mowing height from both sides****5/18/17**

Many golf course superintendents are starting to lower the mowing heights of their greens. Most use a slow process of lowering the height of cut (HOC) by 0.015" or less over a period of several weeks. A good way to reduce plant stress is to increase topdressing frequency while simultaneously lowering HOC.

The sand topdressing protects the crowns from scalping and raises the floor for the mower. It also dilutes thatch that accumulates in early spring because the soils are cool, microbial breakdown of thatch is slow, and the grass is vigorously growing and producing thatch. I typically cut into a green on most site visits to look for accumulation of organic matter layers and find the location of the plant crowns. The healthiest and purest greens usually have nice white crowns protected within the topdressing sand. Frequent sand topdressing also helps to fill imperfections on the putting surface that negatively impact green speed and "trueness." The exact amount of sand required annually varies with location, management, species, etc., but we generally suggest roughly 20 cubic feet of sand is applied to greens per 1000 square feet. Of course, there is the negative side effect from aggressive sand topdressing, especially when lowering HOC. The sand can rapidly dull greens mowers. The positive benefits typically outweigh the negatives.

This spring, make a plan to stay on a frequent sand topdressing. It will improve putting green health and playability. It can also reduce the stress of lowering mowing height in the spring.

**Bill Kreuser, Assistant Professor and Extension Turfgrass Specialist, [wkreuser2@unl.edu](mailto:wkreuser2@unl.edu)**