



# The Mountain State Greenletter

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West Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association

## Board of Director's Message

As the year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to thank all of you who have made this a successful year. It has been a year of growth, learning, and camaraderie, and none of it would have been possible without your dedication and support. Your commitment to your work, our association and this industry are what keeps our courses beautiful and our community strong.

During this holiday season, I hope you take the time to relax, enjoy the company of friends and family, and recharge for the year ahead. Together, we will continue to innovate, support each other, and elevate the standards of our profession.

Wishing you and your families a joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Mitch Roush  
President, Riverside Golf Course

# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## Upcoming Events:

*Spring Meeting - TBD*  
*40th William C. Campbell Fundraiser - Monday, June 30*  
*@ Pete Dye Golf Club*

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*See our course accessories checklist*

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*Josh Janson and Matt Ransom (Little Creek CC) who won the mower donated by Century Equipment*



*Mitch Roush won the Century Cup at Pete Dye and Josh Janson won the Vendor Cup*

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WE'LL CHECK THE BOXES.**

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fertilizer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> play supplies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> topdressing
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**Don Dodson**

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## **Dormant Seeding in Fall/Winter of 2024**

Whether you're looking to overseed damaged area or establish new turf areas, seeding in the late fall after it is expected to germinate can help provide great success in the spring. Typically, late summer and early fall are our best time to establish new seed but not always possible due to a number of factors. Dormant seeding can increase the chances of new turf surviving the summer over spring seeding.

The time frame for dormant seeding will vary based on location and weather patterns. The concept is to place the seed in the soil after the soil temperature has dropped below 40°F and is expected to remain there until the spring. The seed will sit in the ground until conditions are right for germination in the spring.

Using a slit seeder is the ideal method for dormant seeding. This ensures seed-to-soil contact and reduces the movement or loss of seed during the winter. You can slit seed into slightly frozen or snow-covered ground, expanding the window in which establishment work can be done. Shallow aeration followed by broadcast or drop seeding can also be effective. If seed must be applied to bare ground without the use of slit seeding or aeration, it should be incorporated into the soil with a light raking or covered with sand or compost. With any of the above applications, the use of an erosion control blanket can help keep the seed in place and increase your success in the spring. When overseeding existing areas, broadcasting seed with a rotary spreader or drop seeder alone can work well if there is enough vegetation present to hold the seed in place until it can germinate in the spring.

The benefits of dormant seeding over spring seeding are numerous. Spring weather can often be unpredictable and wet. When dormant seeding, you know that the seed is in the ground and can emerge when conditions are right. You don't have to worry about typical spring rains delaying your opportunity to seed. Dormant seeded areas also typically germinate earlier in the season, well before seeding equipment can be brought onto the site.

Having seed in the ground for the initial spring warm-up can also be an advantage when trying to establish grass in an area shaded by deciduous trees. The absence of leaves on the trees in the spring can allow much needed sunlight to reach areas that may be too shaded during the rest of the year to get good results.

Weeds are a major concern during seed establishment. Dormant seeding promotes earlier germination, which can reduce weed pressure in the area because the new turf has a longer time to fill in before spring weeds begin to flourish. It is still recommended to use a weed control product like Armor Tech Trione in the spring during cool-season establishment to decrease weed competition.

There are potential issues with dormant seeding that can decrease success. It is possible that a long, unseasonable warm-up will cause some seed to germinate and then die off when cold temperatures return. Large amounts of runoff can also displace seed. To safeguard against these events, we suggest increasing seeding rates by 10-15% when dormant seeding.

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**Marshall Klay**  
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As we celebrate Thanksgiving with all of our friends and family, we wanted to take a minute to thank you.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy the holiday and take this time to relax and be thankful.

Your Harrell's representatives,



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# A Little Off the Bottom

By Brian Gietka, agronomist, East Region

As we enter winter, frozen or saturated soils can create challenging conditions for maintenance tasks and offseason projects, but hand pruning trees is almost always an option. Many tree management conversations focus on increasing sunlight and air movement by completely removing trees. However, pruning trees from the ground can have very positive impacts without the controversy that comes with complete removal.

Thorough crown cleaning is best performed by certified arborists, but with minimal training and a few hand and pole saws, improvements to tree health, turf health and playability can be quickly realized. During a tree's lifecycle, it is typical for the lower branches to die back first, so removing dead or declining branches will give the tree a clean look, reduce safety concerns and provide a few other benefits. Taller canopies will allow more sunlight to reach the turf and they allow for better air movement. Playability also improves with higher canopies because golfers can find and play wayward shots more easily. As trees grow taller, their branches grow wider and may encroach into playing corridors. Branches that grow over fairways or make a par 3 into a dogleg should be identified for removal. The entire canopy may not have to be pruned back to achieve the desired result, removing a few of the lower branches might do the trick and it's an easy place to start.

Pruning younger, smaller trees for form and structure is another relatively easy task that will serve the golf course well in the long term. Newly planted trees need as much canopy as possible but as they establish, removing lower branches and promoting strong crotches will grow strong, resilient trees. Keep in mind, some flowering trees should not be pruned during the winter as this can remove next season's blooms, which is one of many benefits trees provide to the golfer experience. It won't hurt to wait until after the tree flowers to get a few of those lower branches.

Winter is a great time for in-house tree pruning, so consider training staff on reduction cuts and the three-cut method for proper tree branch pruning. Investing in powered pole saws can make pruning more efficient and I promise these tools will be useful for as long as you have trees on your course. Sending a team out to walk the golf course and hand-prune trees is minimally invasive and can make life easier for your turf and the golfers at your course.

## Northeast Region Agronomists

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Using hand and pole saws from the ground can make quick work of low branches to improve playability and increase sunlight and air movement to the surrounding turf.



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