

Introduction

Currently, the 1100 golf courses in Florida enjoy heavy play and receive numerous national prestigious awards and recognition due to their beauty and playability. Many environmental and man-made variables influence the function of a golf course. Although man has little control over weather conditions which influence a golf course, many cultural or management factors are controllable and can be manipulated to suit the needs of the course. The objective of this publication is to outline those culture factors which influence Florida golf courses with a special emphasis on those which regulate putting green quality and speed.

Mowing

Mowing is the most basic yet most important cultural practice a superintendent can use to provide a desirable turf. All other cultural practices and many aspects of turf quality are affected by mowing. Density, texture, color, root development, and

wear tolerance are some parameters influenced by mowing. Failure to properly mow usually results in weakened turf with poor density and quality.

Turfgrasses can be mowed close to the ground due to their terminal growing point (crown) being located at or just below the soil surface (Fig. 1). Regrowth from cell division and elongation takes place from growing points located below the height of the mower blade. In contrast, upright growing dicot plants have their meristematic tissue at the top or tip of their stems. Consequently, mowing removes this growing point and many upright dicot weeds are eliminated since they do not have enough recuperative potential to recover.

Turfgrass growth habit is also affected by mowing. Tillering following mowing increases shoot density. However, mowing decreases root and rhizome growth because food reserves, following mowing, are utilized for new shoot tissue development at the expense of root and rhizome growth.

BROADLEAF (DICOTYLEDONOUS) PLANT

GRASS (MONOCOTYLEDONOUS) PLANT

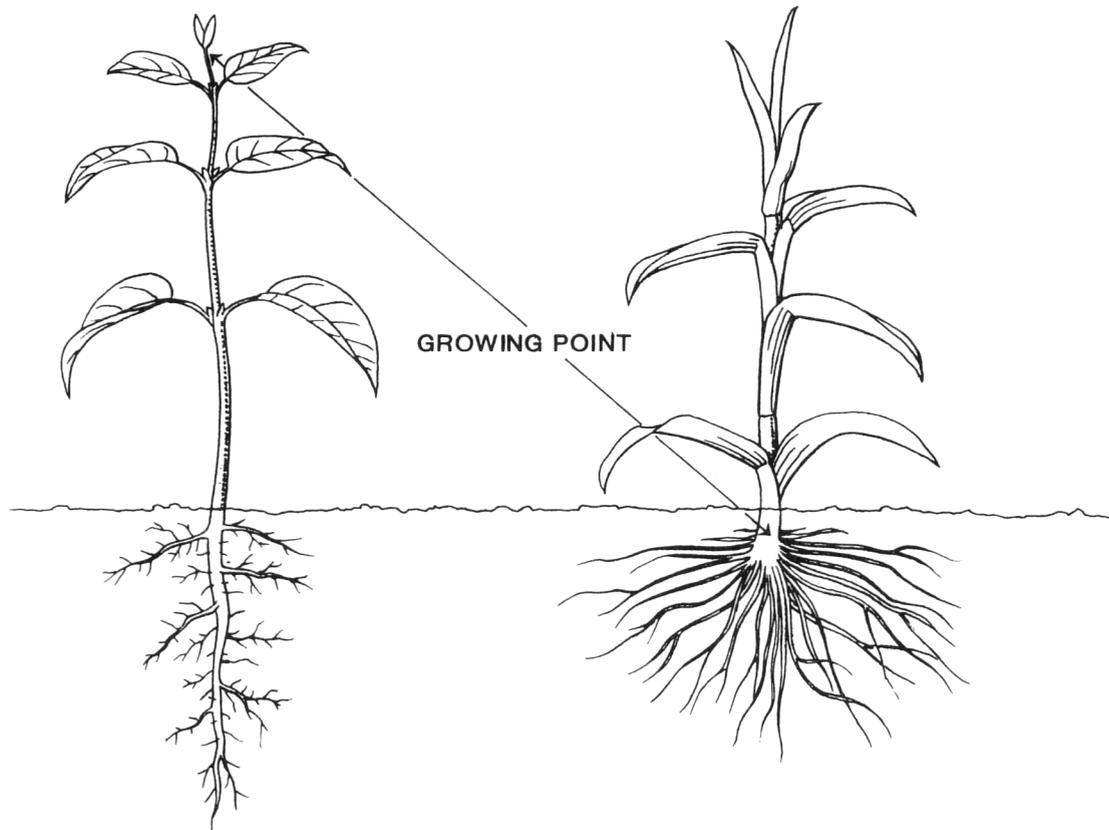


Fig. 1. The prostrate growing point of turfgrasses allows close mowing without permanent damage while many broadleaf plants have their growing points elevated and are damaged from removal by regular mowing.