



FON
force of nature

A LOOK AT ... FROM AN INDEPENDENT PERSPECTIVE from
National Organization Responding Against HUJE that seek to harm the Green Space Industry (NORAHG)

Golf Course Maintenance

A Look At Managing Turfgrasses

Wispy Fine-Leaved Fescue Rough

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Selected and adapted excerpts

If you want WISPY FESCUE ... it must be crispy !

How would you describe the PERFECT NATURAL ROUGH ?

For many golfers, the romanticized version would be ...

- sparse stand of golden brown fescue
- about knee-high
- crowned by slender seed-heads that yield and ripple like ocean waves against the gentle breeze.



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Furthermore, when an errant shot finds this ideal rough, you find your ball without too much difficulty, and with a little luck, have a decent chance of advancing the ball toward the putting green.

Worst-case scenario is simply a wedge back to the short grass.

Never lost, never in jail and never — well, hardly ever — is the ball unplayable.

Alas, this perfect rough is quite the oxymoron, if you think about it.



Just where would we find this fescue of our fantasy ?

The avid golfer would probably remember watching a wayward drive into deep rough at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club during U.S. Open television coverage, or recollect images of sparse, golden roughs from various venues in the United Kingdom during coverage of the British Open.

Fescue is a catch-all term often used to describe several species of grasses.

There are many different species of Fine-Leaved Fescues —

- Chewings Fescue
- Hard Fescue
- Creeping Red Fescue
- Sheep's Fescue

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The classic Fine-Leaved Fescue rough that most golfers would encounter is most likely composed of some combination of these species.

There is no shortage of Fine-Leaved Fescue roughs to be found at golf courses.

In fact, it's likely more of a challenge to find a course built during the past twenty years where the architect has not incorporated UN-MOWED Fine-Leaved Fescue into the design.



So why are there GNARLY, WEED-INFESTED JUNGLES OF ROUGH instead of SPARSE, WISPY FINE-LEAVED FESCUE ROUGH ?

The primary reasons for the FAILURE of Fine-Leaved Fescue rough are ...

- Fertilizer
- Golf cars
- Herbicide
- Water
- Weather

Granted, ample moisture and nutrients are essential during establishment, but once the grass matures, the best way to maintain a relatively pure stand of sparse turf is to LIMIT INPUTS OF IRRIGATION, NITROGEN, AND 2,4-D HERBICIDE as much as possible.

In contrast, the quickest way to transform thin fescue into an unplayable weed patch is TO APPLY PLENTY OF IRRIGATION, NITROGEN, AND 2,4-D HERBICIDE.

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The strength of Fine-Leaved Fescue is the ABILITY TO SURVIVE IN DRY, SANDY, INFERTILE SOILS — better than Kentucky Bluegrass, Bentgrass or most other Cool-Season Grasses commonly used on a golf course.

Fine-Leaved Fescue's weakness is its INABILITY TO COMPETE with the aforementioned grasses or weeds when plenty of water and nutrients are available.



Far too often, Fine-Leaved Fescue is planted in areas where it is DOOMED TO FAILURE.

Fine-Leaved Fescue will probably fail in the following golf course locations —

- Areas immediately adjacent to greens or fairways that are irrigated frequently
- Low, chronically wet areas
- Sites with heavy soils that hold abundant water and nutrients

Eliminating or adjusting sprinkler coverage to keep fescue dry is only part of the solution, since we cannot control the WEATHER.

EXTREME WEATHER WITH FREQUENT RAINFALL DURING AN UNUSUALLY WET SEASON can cause just as much harm to a fescue rough as uncontrolled irrigation.

In addition, a wet spring can produce dense foliage that persists all season and a crop of extra-tall seed-heads that are susceptible to being permanently blown-down (lodging) in a strong wind.

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Additionally, CONCENTRATED GOLF CAR TRAFFIC will definitely affect the health and appearance of Fine-Leaved Fescue roughs.

Golf cars and fescue are like oil and water ... they just don't mix.

Golf cars can cause problems of equal magnitude on regularly mowed fescue fairways or roughs.

Make every effort to keep the roughs DRY.

Keep golf cars off the turf.

Control weeds with a well-timed herbicide application when necessary.

Prevent the accumulation of excess plant debris in natural roughs with an ANNUAL MOWING OPERATION, but be sure to REMOVE THE PLANT DEBRIS to prevent clumps of dead grass from smothering the turf.

Follow these suggestions and you just might achieve the WISPY FESCUE of your dreams.

The roughs will look great from a distance and, with any luck, you won't have much opportunity to see them any closer with a club in your hand.



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A LOOK AT is a Report presented by National Organization Responding Against Huje that seek to harm or misinform the Green Space Industry (NORAHG). It is a series of Reports destined for the Green Space Industry, nationwide across Canada, the United States, and overseas. This Report has been developed for the education and entertainment of the reader by providing TECHNICAL INFORMATION WITH COMMENTARY.

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A LOOK AT, and its various incarnations, is the brainchild of William H. Gathercole and his entourage. Mr. Gathercole is a principal founder of the Modern Professional Lawn Care Industry in both Ontario and Quebec. He holds a degree in Horticulture from the University of Guelph, and another pure and applied science degree from McGill University. Mr. Gathercole was the FIRST PERSON EVER to obtain University degrees and contribute to BOTH the Professional Lawn Care and Golf Maintenance Industries. He has worked in virtually all aspects of the Green Space Industry, including golf, professional lawn care, and distribution. Mr. Gathercole has supervised, consulted, programmed, and/or overseen the successful execution of hundreds of thousands of management operations in the urban landscape. He has advised, certified, instructed, and trained thousands of turf and ornamental managers and technicians. Mr. Gathercole has also been an agricultural agronomist. Mr. Gathercole is personally credited for crafting the Exception Status that has allowed the Golf Industry to avoid being subjected to the lunatic-terrorist-prohibition of pest control products. He is also the creator of the signs that are now used for posting after application. Mr. Gathercole is now retired, although his name continues to appear as the founder of A LOOK AT.



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