

INTERNATIONAL GREENKEEPERS FOR HIRE

Made by greenkeepers, for greenkeepers.

Educational card #7



Poa, ways to control and prevent

Poa Annua (Annual meadow grass) is a common grass that is part of the Poaceae family.

This family of grass provides staple foods, from domesticated cereal crops such as maize, wheat, rice, barley, and millet, to feed for animals. For some, Poa is a turf manager's daily grass; for others it may be their enemy. It all depends on your personal preference, topography and available resources. Some choose to embrace Poa and use it to their advantage; others decide to control it. On today's educational card, we'll be treating it as a weed. Like most weeds, it's really about getting ahead and then continuing to follow processes of management. Even the best looking swards of grass can be susceptible to being invaded by this weed grass, and controlling it, preventing it and eradicating it can sometimes be a bit of a fine art which can cause many a headache in the process. Here we give you a few of many options that may work for you. To prevent, you may choose to use pre-emergence to kill the poa as it tries to germinate.

Verti-Cutting

Done properly, this is one of the quickest and most effective ways of removing the seed and the stalks from within your sward. Verti-cutting allows for deep penetration through the sward to the soil and removes various unwanted weeds, weaker grasses and invasive species, leaving you with a clean profile. Doing this thoroughly is key to its success.

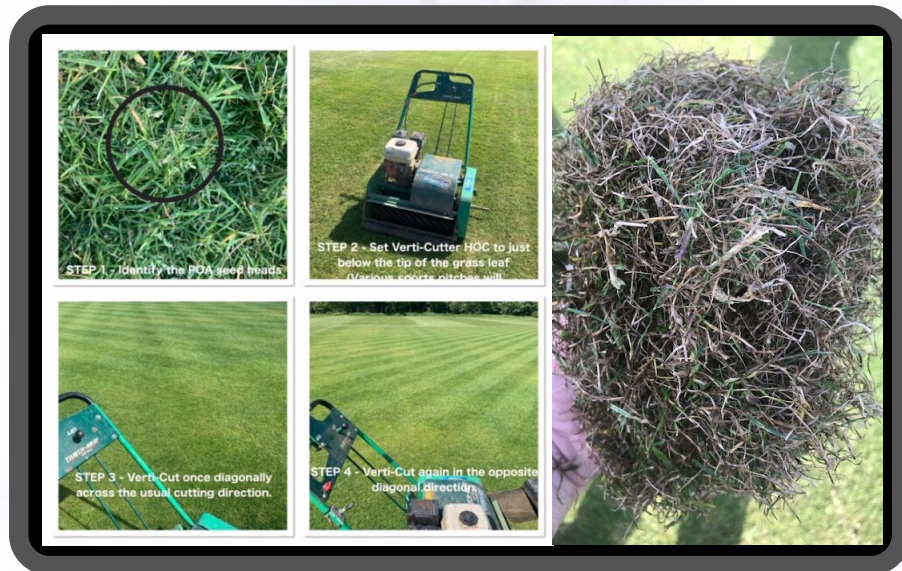
Where possible, cut in a diagonal across the usual cutting direction as pictured. Usually 2-3 passes will have removed 95% of the problematic weed growth using a verti-cutter or similar machine. After this, you should mow to collect remaining debris.

Following this quite heavy process of verti-cutting, if the sward looks thin, this may be the perfect time for an overseed if you have the means to do so. Note that it's possible that after verti-cutting you may find some standing poa seed heads; using a rotary or a power brush is more effective at collecting seed heads than cutting with a cylinder mower.

Fraise/Koro Mow the Surface-End of Season

Koro'ing a surface is quite expensive and some would see as an extreme measure to remove annual meadow grass. Ultimately, though, without it, you will never really regain control of a healthy grass growth as weeds will find it easy to germinate within the sward.

This problem will continue if the sward is already saturated with Poa and other weeds. In many cases, the most effective way for you to eradicate the problem is to koro the surface and start afresh. If you do go down this route, you'll need to take action once every three years or so, by hiring a specialist contractor. This will remove the shallow rooted weed grass, and if you're lucky, the process will leave the ryegrass to regrow back, but you shall also need to overseed. This is also a great way of removing thatch, and many sports clubs do this on a yearly basis.



Other Annual Meadow Grass Control Options?

- 1-Starving it out - as Poa is shallow rooted, this is an option that may be worth looking into, but unless thorough renovations and seeding is done, you could end up with additional problems and maybe more Poa.
- 2-We all hear of groundsmen carrying out total weedkilling and removing all vegetation from their squares. Concern would be leftover vegetation and organic matter so take this into account.
- 3-Use of a growth regulator will stop Poa from seeding on existing plants, so a process of removal will still be needed. PGRs to be applied by a certificated spraying operator.
- 4-High phosphorus levels are said to contribute towards high levels of Poa. Annual soil nutrient testing is the only way of monitoring and managing this. Testing usually takes place when the plant is more dormant i.e. winter.
- 5-Use of a good scarifier to a semi "kind-of" effect, meaning it won't completely remove the top profile, but done enough times in enough directions, it will remove the vast majority of the weed grasses and thatch.