

The Benefits of Tall Grasses on Golf Courses

Whether you are a scratch golfer or a weekend duffer, you have likely noticed that many golf courses are allowing taller grasses in roughs and out-of-play areas. Chances are you have heard or even said yourself:

“If they would just cut this grass I would be able to find my ball.”

“Why are golf courses permitting maintained turfgrass to grow tall under the trees that line the fairways or along the edges of water features - in all the spots we are not supposed to land but sometimes do?”

“Is it because the superintendent is lazy?”

“Is the club trying to boost its golf balls sales?”

The actual reason for allowing taller grasses, prairies, or wildflower meadows to grow in out-of-play areas is not to penalize errant shots, but for the many environmental and economic benefits they offer. These include:

Golf Benefits

- Provides distinctive contrast to the highly maintained playing surfaces
- Adds interest and beauty to the round of golf
- Enables golf courses to showcase the *nature of the game*

Environmental Benefits

- Creates needed habitat for plants and wildlife
- Reduces the need for regular pesticide and fertilizer applications
- Reduces water use
- Adds diversity
- Showcases the unique regional natural heritage where the course is located, and often helps to protect rare plants and wildlife.
- Minimizes erosion
- Provides travel corridors for wildlife to safely move through the course

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By allowing once regularly maintained turfgrass to grow tall, Stone Creek Golf Club in Oregon reduces maintenance costs and adds distinctive beauty to the course.

Financial and Labor Savings

- Lowers maintenance costs and reduces the need for high-intensity or time-consuming maintenance
- Reduces equipment wear and tear
- Reduces costs for gasoline, pesticides, fertilizers, and water
- Increases funds for other needs and enables staff to concentrate where it really counts.