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(54) **GOLF PITCH MARK REPAIR TOOL**

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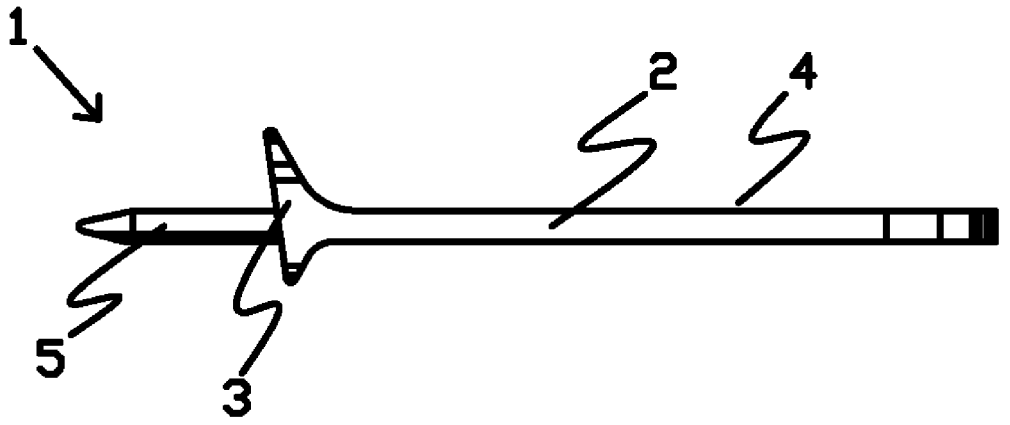
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A pitch mark repair tool that includes a base with a push ledge and a single prong extending from the push ledge or from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge. Preferably, the push ledge is a hilt that acts as a thumb guard. The base preferably includes a location for a thumb positioned away from the push ledge. The location for the thumb can be an indentation or ridged area. The base can be shaped to have a flat profile or to have a profile of a corporate logo (e.g., the Nike®"swoosh") when viewed side-on. Other shapes are possible. Also, methods of using the pitch mark repair tool.



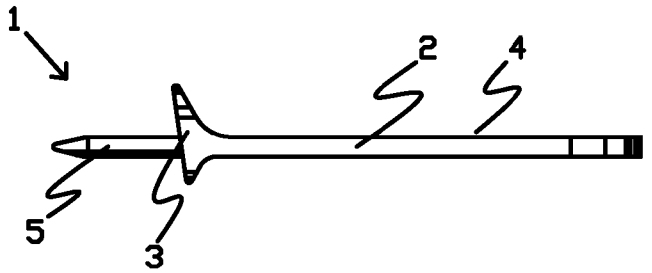


Fig. 1

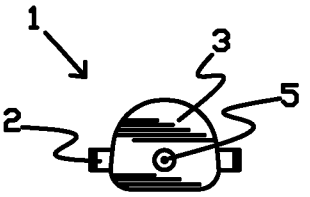


Fig. 2

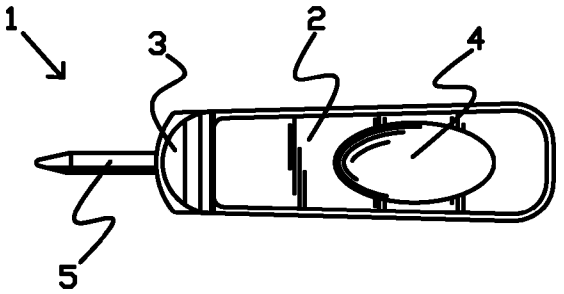


Fig. 3

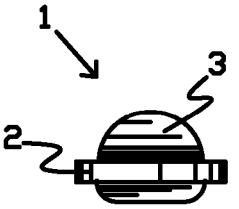


Fig. 4

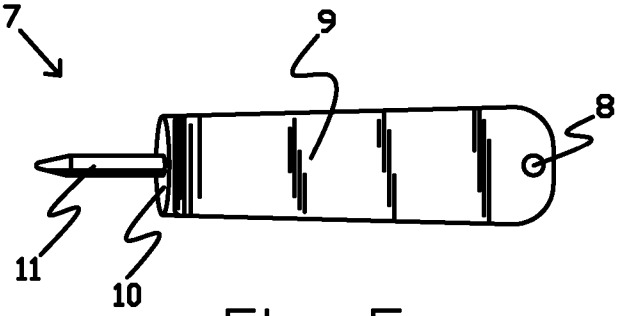


Fig. 5

Fig. 6

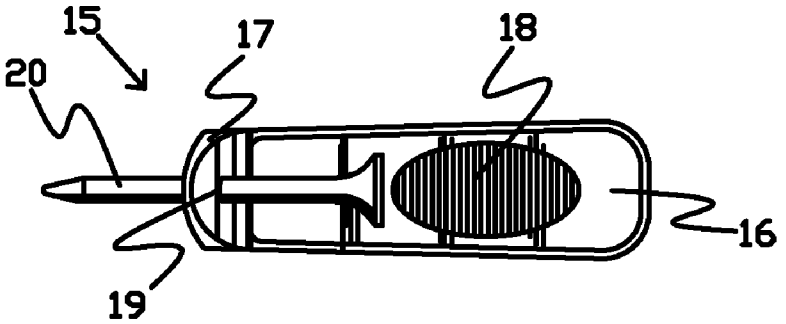


Fig. 7

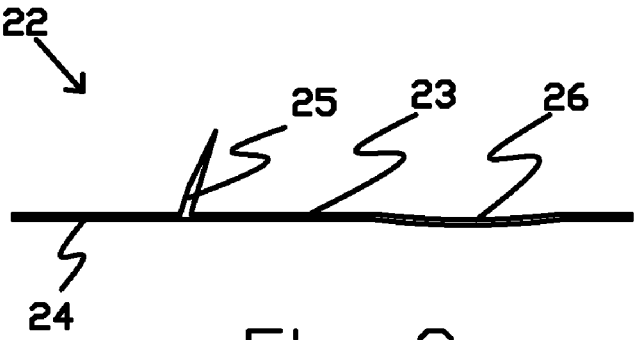


Fig. 8

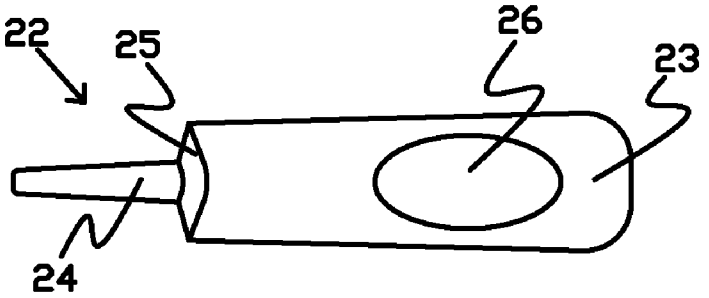


Fig. 9

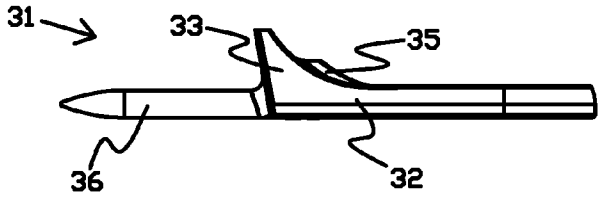


Fig. 10

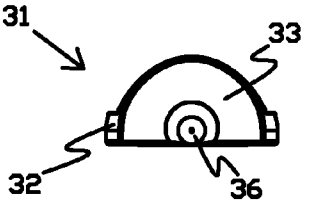


Fig. 11

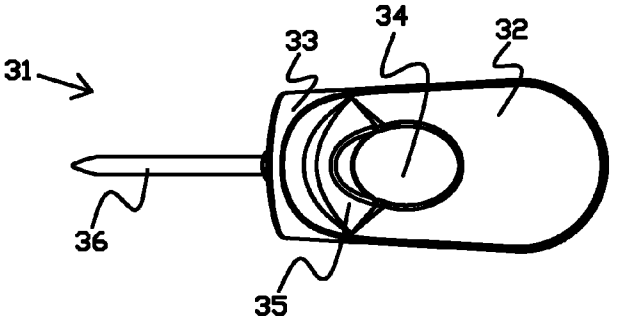


Fig. 12

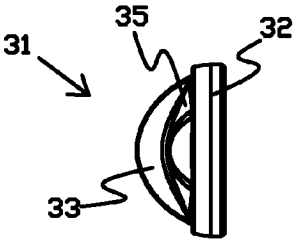


Fig. 13

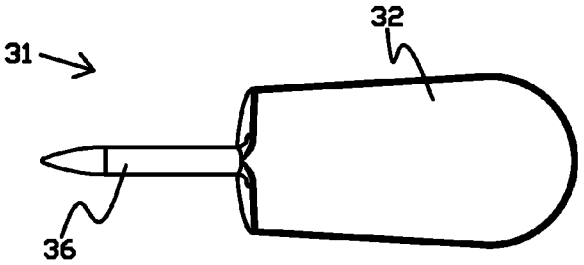


Fig. 14

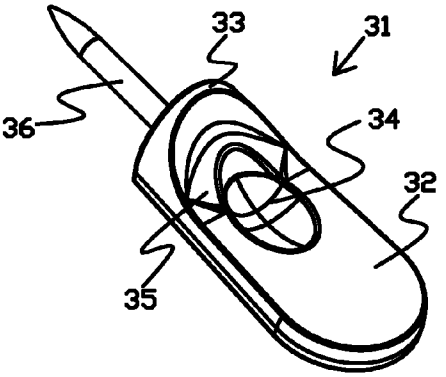


Fig. 15

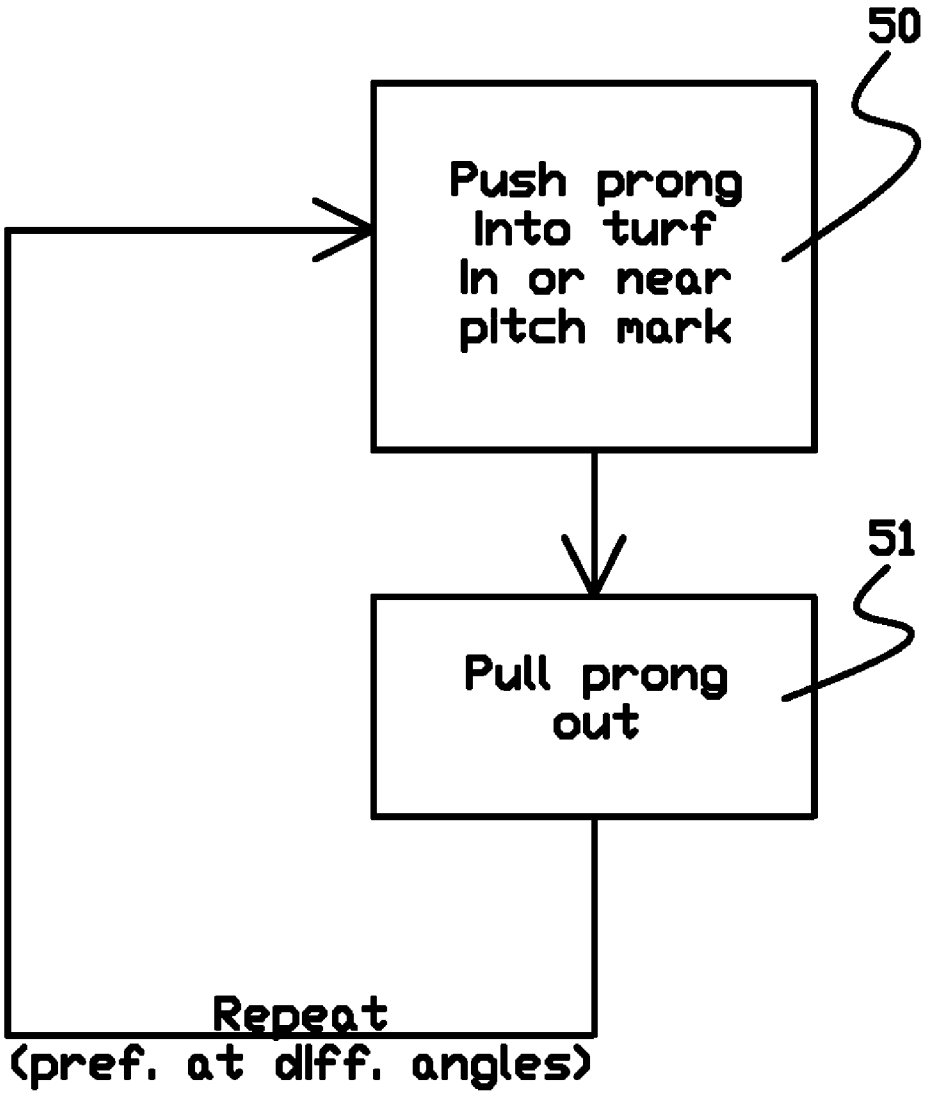

50
Push prong into turf in or near pitch mark
51
Pull prong out
Repeat
(pref. at diff. angles)

Fig. 16

GOLF PITCH MARK REPAIR TOOL

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/255,326, titled "Golf Pitch Mark Repair Tool," filed Oct. 21,2005, in the name of the same inventor, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Design patent application Ser. No. 29/232,720, titled "Golf Pitch Mark Repair Tool," executed Jun. 23, 2005, in the name of the same inventor, now U.S. Design Pat. No. D526,378. These applications are hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] This invention relates to a golf pitch mark repair tool.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] When a golf ball lands hard on a putting green, the golf ball can make a ball mark on the green in the jargon of golf, this mark is called a "pitch mark."

[0006] Putting greens are supposed to provide a uniform putting surface. Unrepaired pitch marks can mar this surface. For this reason, part of golf etiquette is to repair pitch marks left by one's golf balls on greens.

[0007] Unfortunately, many people repair pitch marks improperly. They use a pitch mark repair tool that has two prongs much like a fork. They insert the prongs of this tool beside and under the pitch mark, and then ply and/or twist up the center of the pitch mark with the repair tool.

[0008] Inserting the prongs of the repair tool and lifting or twisting can tear the roots of the grass at the pitch mark. Prying up the center of the pitch mark further damages the grass and also exposes the soil under the mark. As a result, the grass is likely to die, resulting in a marred putting surface.

[0009] The dead grass at improperly repaired pitch marks can take around three weeks to heal, during which time a significant number of pitch marks can accumulate. This presents a serious challenge for greens keepers and golf course owners.

[0010] A proper method exists for repairing pitch marks. This method involves inserting prongs of a repair tool just outside of the pitch mark and then levering the tool toward a center of the pitch mark. However, even with this method, damage can still occur. Levering of the tool can cause the prongs to tear roots of grass around the pitch mark.

[0011] Some professional golfers use a tee instead of a two-pronged repair tool to repair pitch marks. Unfortunately, tees often break when used for this purpose. In addition, a person can easily stub his or her thumb into the ground when using a tee to repair a pitch mark, resulting in pain, dirt under the person's thumbnail, and even a broken thumb nail. As a result, few regular golfers use a tee to repair pitch marks.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] Accordingly, what is needed is a repair tool that promotes proper repair of pitch marks and that addresses the issues with existing tools and techniques discussed above.

[0013] One embodiment of the invention that addresses this need is a pitch mark repair tool that includes a base with a push ledge and a single prong extending from the push ledge or from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge. Preferably, the push ledge is a hilt that acts as a thumb guard. This hilt can help to protect a person's thumb from being stubbed when the tool is used. The base preferably includes a location for the thumb positioned away from the push ledge. The location for the thumb can be an indentation or ridged area, the center of which preferably is at least one third way across the base from the push ledge.

[0014] The single prong tends to decrease root damage when used properly as compared to conventional two-pronged tools. In addition, the position of the thumb location (e.g., indentation or ridged area) promotes proper use. Thus, this repair tool is superior to existing pitch mark repair tools.

[0015] Another embodiment of the invention is a pitch mark repair tool that also includes a base with a push ledge. This embodiment further includes an opening in the base or push ledge for insertion of a golf tee so as to form a single prong extending from the base or push ledge.

[0016] In some embodiments, the base further includes a through hole at an end opposite the push ledge and the single prong, for example for attachment to a key ring.

[0017] The base can be shaped to have a flat profile when viewed side-on. Alternatively, the base and the push ledge can be shaped to have a profile of a corporate logo such as the Nike(t "swoosh" when viewed side-on. Other shapes are possible.

[0018] The invention also encompasses methods of using pitch mark repair tools according to the invention.

[0019] This brief summary has been provided so that the nature of the invention may be understood quickly. A more complete understanding of the invention may be obtained by reference to the following description of the preferred embodiments thereof in connection with the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] FIGS. **1** to **5** show various views of embodiments of a pitch mark repair tool according to the invention.

[0021] FIG. **6** shows a side view of a pitch mark repair tool modified to incorporate a corporate logo into the shape of the repair tool

[0022] FIG. **7** shows a side view of a pitch mark repair tool modified to use an actual golf tee.

[0023] FIGS. **8** and **9** show another embodiment of a pitch mark repair tool according to the invention that has a simplified shape.

[0024] FIGS. **10** to **15** also show another embodiment of the pitch mark repair tool.

[0025] FIG. **16** is a flowchart that illustrates use of a pitch mark repair tool according to the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Pitch Mark Repair Tool

[0026] FIGS. **1** to **5** show various views of embodiments of a pitch mark repair tool according to the invention. FIG.

1 is a side view, FIG. 2 is a front end view, FIG. 3 is a top view, and FIG. 4 is a back end view of one embodiment of the invention. FIG. 5 is a bottom view showing a variation of this embodiment.

[0027] Briefly, one embodiment of the invention is a pitch mark repair tool that includes a base with a push ledge and a single prong extending from the push ledge or from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge. Preferably, the push ledge is a hilt that acts as a thumb guard. This hilt can help to protect a person's thumb from being stubbed when the tool is used. The base also preferably includes a location for a thumb positioned away from the push ledge. The location for the thumb can be an indentation or ridged area, the center of which preferably is at least one third way across the base from the push ledge. Alternatively, the location could be closer to the push ledge.

[0028] Thus, FIGS. 1 to 4 show pitch mark repair tool 1 that includes base 2 with push ledge 3. In these figures, push ledge 3 extends both above and below base 2; however, this need not be the case. The push ledge preferably is at or near an end of the base. In a preferred embodiment, the push ledge is a hilt that acts as a thumb guard. This hilt can help to protect a person's thumb from being stubbed when the tool is used.

[0029] Base 2 also includes location 4 for the thumb positioned away from push ledge 3. Location 4 can be an indentation, a ridged area, or simply a flat expanse sufficiently large for a thumb. FIG. 3 illustrates use of an indentation as location 4 for placement of the thumb. Preferably, the location's center is at least one third way across base 2 from push ledge 3. In alternative embodiments, a specific location for a thumb is not included in the base.

[0030] Pitch mark repair tool 1 also includes single prong 5 extending from push ledge 1. Although the prong preferably extends directly from the push ledge as shown, the prong can extend from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge. In a preferred embodiment, prong 5 is round and has a diameter a little smaller than a golf tee. The smaller prong tends to do less damage than conventional repair tools and even tees when used to repair a pitch mark. In one embodiment, the prong is approximately 1¼ inches long. Alternatively, the prong can be thinner, thicker, shorter, longer, flat, or have any other suitable size and shape.

[0031] FIG. 5 shows a bottom view of pitch mark repair tool 7 similar to the one shown in FIGS. 1 to 4. One difference is that pitch mark repair tool 7 includes through-hole 8 at an end of base 9 opposite push ledge 10 and single prong 11.

[0032] The single prong of the pitch mark repair tools shown in FIGS. 1 to 5 tends to decrease root damage when used properly as compared to conventional two-pronged tools. In addition, the position of the thumb location (e.g., indentation or ridged area) promotes proper use, while the hilt helps to protect the user's thumb and thumb nail. Thus, this repair tool is superior to existing pitch mark repair tools.

[0033] In FIGS. 1 to 5, the base of the pitch mark repair tools has a flat profile when viewed side-on. However, this need not be the case. For example, the base and the push ledge can be shaped to have a profile of a corporate logo when viewed side-on. FIG. 6 shows an example of such an embodiment in which the base and the push ledge are shaped to have a profile of the Nike®"swoosh"12 when viewed side-on. Other shapes are possible.

[0034] FIG. 7 shows a side view of a pitch mark repair tool modified to use an actual golf tee. In FIG. 7, pitch mark repair tool 15 includes base 16 with push ledge 17 and location 18 for a thumb positioned away from the push ledge. This figure illustrates use of a ridged area as the location for the thumb.

[0035] The embodiment shown in FIG. 7 further includes an opening 19 in based 16 or push ledge 17 for insertion of golf tee 20 so as to form a single prong extending from the base or push ledge. This opening preferably has a diameter of a golf tee.

[0036] FIGS. 8 and 9 show another embodiment of a pitch mark repair tool according to the invention that has a simplified shape. In these figures, pitch mark repair tool 22 includes a flat base 23, flat single prong 24, and flat push ledge 25. In this embodiment, location 26 is shown as an indentation.

[0037] The embodiment shown in FIGS. 8 and 9 is particularly suited to be made from a flat blank of metal or plastic, although it is not limited to these materials. The blank could be cut to form the prong. The resulting "flaps" on the side of the prong could be bent up, trimmed, and joined to form the push ledge. In addition, the indentation for a thumb could be easily stamped into the metal or plastic. Alternatively, the indentation could be omitted, in which case the location for a thumb would simply be a flat expanse sufficiently large for the thumb.

[0038] FIGS. 10 to 15 show another embodiment of the pitch mark repair tool. FIG. 10 is a side view, FIG. 11 is a front end view, FIG. 12 is a top view, FIG. 13 is a back end view, FIG. 14 is a bottom view, and FIG. 15 is a perspective view of this embodiment.

[0039] These figures show pitch mark repair tool 31 that includes base 32 with push ledge 33. In these figures, push ledge 33 extends above but not below base 32. hi a preferred embodiment, the push ledge is a hilt that acts as a thumb guard. This hilt can help to protect the person's thumb from being stubbed when the tool is used.

[0040] The base also includes location 34 for a thumb positioned away from push ledge 33. Location 34 can be an indentation, a ridged area, or simply a flat expanse sufficiently large for a thumb. FIGS. 10, 12, and 15 show that in this embodiment, an indentation is used as location 34 for placement of the thumb. Preferably, the location's center is at least one third way across base 32 from push ledge 33.

[0041] The tool in these figures further includes raised area 35 between push ledge 33 and location 34. This raised area can help to keep a person's thumb properly positioned and can also provide support for a person's thumb nail. The latter can be particularly helpful for female golfers with longer thumb nails.

[0042] Pitch mark repair tool 31 also includes single prong 36 extending from push ledge 31. Although the prong preferably extends directly from the push ledge as shown, the prong can extend from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge. In a preferred embodiment, prong 36 is round and has a diameter a little smaller than a golf tee. The smaller prong tends to do less damage than conventional

repair tools and even tees when used to repair a pitch mark. In one embodiment, the prong is approximately 1¼ inches long. Alternatively, the prong can be thinner, thicker, shorter, longer, flat, or have any other suitable size and shape.

[0043] The single prong of the pitch mark repair tools shown in FIGS. **10** to **15** tends to decrease root damage when used properly. In addition, the position of the thumb location (e.g., indentation or ridged area) promotes proper use, while the hilt helps to protect the user's thumb and thumb nail. Thus, this repair tool is superior to existing pitch mark repair tools.

[0044] A pitch mark repair tool according to the invention, including all of the embodiments discussed above and variations thereof, can be made of any suitably strong and durable material including but not limited to plastic, wood, or metal.

Method of Use

[0045] FIG. **16** is a flowchart illustrating use of a pitch mark repair tool according to the invention.

[0046] In step **50**, the single prong of the tool is pushed into turf around and possibly in the pitch mark. The push ledge of the tool can help to push raised grass and soil down. The push ledge can also bump raised edges of the pitch mark toward a center of the mark, reducing its size.

[0047] The single prong will tend to slide past roots instead of tearing them. Furthermore, the single prong will tend not to damage roots even if the tool is twisted in the soil, in contrast to two-pronged tools. Thus, the tool tends not to do as much damage as conventional two-pronged tools when it is inserted into the turf.

[0048] In step **51**, the single prong is pulled out of the turf. This pulling action can actually lift indented grass and soil up, for example in the middle of a pitch mark.

[0049] These steps are repeated, preferably at different angles, until the mark is repaired to a user's satisfaction. The combined in and out motion of the single prong of the repair tool tends to level off and raise a pitch mark. These actions can also actually aerate the soil, which tends to promote healing.

[0050] In some instances, a putter or shoe can be used to completely flatten the pitch mark after repair.

[0051] During use, the location (e.g., indentation or ridged area) for a thumb on the tool encourages proper placement and motion of the tool. In addition, the push ledge/hilt helps to protect the user's thumb and thumb nail. Thus, the tool encourages a user to push in and pull out the prong of the tool enough times to repair a pitch mark properly.

[0052] The result is a repaired pitch mark that tends to heal more quickly than pitch marks repaired using existing pitch mark repair tools and techniques, thereby tending to improve turf recovery time.

Alternative Embodiments

[0053] The invention is in no way limited to the specifics of any particular embodiments and examples disclosed herein. For example, the terms "preferably," preferred embodiment, "one embodiment,""this embodiment,""alternatively" and the like denote features that are preferable but not essential to include in embodiments of the invention. Furthermore, features described with respect to any one embodiment are equally applicable to other embodiments. For example, indentation **4** or ridged area **18** can be used with any of the embodiments, as can through-hole **8**. Many other variations are possible which remain within the content, scope and spirit of the invention, and these variations would become clear to those skilled in the art after perusal of this application.

What is claimed is:

1. A pitch mark repair tool comprising:

a base including a push ledge; and

a single prong extending from the push ledge or from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge.

2. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 1, wherein the push ledge is a hilt that acts as a thumb guard.

3. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 1, wherein the base further includes a location for a thumb positioned away from the push ledge

4. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 3, wherein the location for the thumb comprises an indentation or ridged area.

5. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 4, wherein a center of the indentation or ridged area is at least one third way across the base from the push ledge.

6. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 3, further comprising a raised area between the push ledge and the location for the thumb.

7. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 1, wherein the base further includes a through hole at an end opposite the push ledge and the single prong.

8. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 1, wherein the tool is made from plastic, wood, or metal.

9. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 1, wherein the base is shaped to have a flat profile when viewed side-on.

10. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 1, wherein the base and the push ledge are shaped to have a profile of a corporate logo when viewed side-on.

11. A pitch mark repair tool comprising:

a base including a push ledge;

an opening in the base or push ledge for insertion of a tee so as to form a single prong extending from the push ledge or from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge.

12. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 11, wherein the push ledge is a hilt that acts as a thumb guard.

13. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 11, wherein the base further includes a location for a thumb positioned away from the push ledge

14. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 13, wherein the location for the thumb comprises an indentation or ridged area.

15. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 14, wherein a center of the indentation or ridged area is at least one third way across the base from the push ledge.

16. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 13, further comprising a raised area between the push ledge and the location for the thumb.

17. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 11, wherein the tool is made from plastic, wood, or metal.

18. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 11, wherein the base is shaped to have a flat profile when viewed side-on.

19. A pitch mark repair tool as in claim 11, wherein the base and the push ledge are shaped to have a profile of a corporate logo when viewed side-on.

20. A method of repairing a pitch mark using a pitch mark repair tool that includes a base including a push ledge and a single prong extending from the push ledge or from a portion of the base adjacent the push ledge, the method comprising the steps of:

pushing the single prong of the tool into turf around and possibly in the pitch mark;

pulling the single prong of the tool out of the turf; and

repeating the pushing and the pulling steps.

21. A method as in claim 20, wherein during use, the push ledge acts as a hilt to protect a user's thumb.

* * * * *