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CURRENT TRENDS IN FERTILITY PROGRAMS FOR GOLF COURSE PUTTING GREENS

By: T.A. Nikolai, R.N. Calhoun, B.J. Horvath, K.W. Frank, and J.M. Vargas Jr.

Introduction

Spoon feeding programs have become the status quo for fertilization of golf course putting greens. Spoon feeding can be defined as applying small amounts of fertilizer at frequent intervals throughout the season. The objectives of spoon feeding programs are to satisfy the nutritional needs of the plant by applying light, frequent applications of balanced nutrient solutions. Additionally, spoon feeding programs are popular because they maintain control over growth, maintain consistent green speeds, and potentially improve nutrient use efficiency.

The current trend in putting green fertilization is to spray 0.1 lb. N/M every ten days throughout the growing season. This practice leads to 0.3 lb. N/M monthly. Furthermore, if the program is initiated on April 1 and ends November 1, a little over 2 lb. of N/M will be applied annually.

Materials and Methods

On April 28, 2000 a study was initiated that combined historical and current fertility practices at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center at MSU. The study was conducted on a Penncross creeping bentgrass green that was mowed with a walk behind mower at the bench height of 0.130 inches. Irrigation was provided at 0.1" per day regardless of rain events. Light sand topdressing was applied every two weeks and the plots were verticut in weeks that topdressing was not applied. The eight treatments are outlined in Table 1 (see page 3).

Stimp meter measurements were taken every 5 days starting on June 1. Turfgrass quality ratings were taken throughout the study on a scale of 1 to 9 with 1 = poor, 6 = acceptable, and 9 = excellent quality. The objectives of the study were to determine the effects of nitrogen rates and application frequency on ball roll distance (green speed), turfgrass quality, and disease symptoms.

Results and Discussion

The monthly 1 lb. N/M treatment consistently had acceptable turf quality ratings (> 6) while the check plot always resulted in unacceptable turf quality. There were no statistically significant differences in turfgrass quality between the monthly 1 lb. N/M Methex treatments with or without Primo.

The plots receiving only 0.1 lb. N/M had unacceptable turfgrass quality on all but two rating dates. However, turf plots treated with 0.1 lb. N/M that were initiated with a pound of nitrogen in the early

spring or tank-mixed with Primo had acceptable turfgrass quality on most rating dates.

With respect to green speed, the 0.1 lb. N/M treatment had significantly faster green speeds than the 1 lb. N/M Methex and 1 lb. N/M urea treatments throughout most of the study. On average, the 1 lb. N/M Methex and 1 lb. N/M urea treatments were approximately 8" slower than the 0.1 lb. N/M treatment.

On the four sampling occasions, significant green speed differences existed between the 0.1 lb. N/M and 1 lb. N/M Methex + Primo treatments. The 0.1 lb. N/M treatment was on average 5" faster than the 1 lb. N/M Methex + Primo treatment. There were no differences in green speed between the 0.1 lb. N/M with and without Primo. The 0.1 lb. N/M treatments that were initiated in the spring with either a 1 lb. N/M natural organic or 1 lb. N/M starter fertilizer yielded slower green speed measurements on only two and three occasions, respectively, as compared to the 0.1 lb. N/M treatment with no spring fertilizer supplement.

Stimp meter measurements of 6" are commonly accepted as the minimum difference in green speed detectable by the average golfer. For this reason green speed consistency for each treatment was estimated by determining the number of times a 6" difference or less was observed between successive measurements.

In our study there were three days that Stimp meter data were collected resulting in all treatments having greater than a 6" change in green speed. It is hypothesized that rain events were the major contributing factor resulting in the drop in green speed on all three of those dates. These three data sets were disregarded in determining consistency of green speed.

Given the criteria, the check plots had the least variation in green speed with only two observations varying by 6" or more. The 0.1 lb. N/M treatment

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President's Message.....

Here's spring and we're looking for 1 to 3 inches of snow (4/16-4/17). Some of my members are calling it an onion snow, I call it ENOUGH!!! This has been one of the longest winters that I can remember. In this month's newsletter you'll find the monthly meeting schedule sites. I must apologize, because we have not been able to finalize the meeting dates. I'll make sure we get that done as soon as possible. I feel that this year's sites look very exciting. Let's keep our fingers crossed for some great weather for this coming summer.

Gene Huelster

P.S. If you ever have any suggestions for this Association, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

From the Editor's Desk.....

Well another *Chips & Putts* is upon us which means the golfing could not be too far behind. Most courses in our region opened or will be opening much later than in previous years. I think most of us can concur that "it's been a long winter". Long winters mean golfers are looking and hoping to golf as soon as the snow melts. And sometimes even before all the snow has melted. It is this type of situation that makes all our jobs a little tougher. At Glen Oak we sustained some ice damage on one green (even after pushing snow/ice off the surface from late January on). I'm thankful that this type of damage was isolated to just one green (it of course was the green that is surrounded by 40-50 foot evergreen trees). Since I realized that we had some damage I contact several area superintendents to get some feed back. I also had two superintendents visit and a few others ask for digital pictures via email. Getting others involved helped me figure out the situation and formulate a plan of attack. It never ceases to amaze me how speaking with others about problems helps all of us. **THANKS GUYS!!** As my club president told me: "if we didn't have problems we wouldn't need you". Good luck to everyone for a successful golf season. And if I can help anyone do not hesitate to call.

On pages 4 & 8 of this edition we have "Roamin' Around the GCSAA." Ed Keil, Superintendent of Lehman GC approached me about this type of column over the winter. I thought it was a great idea to give everyone a sampling of what GCSAA has to offer the industry as seen through Ed's eyes. I am grateful to Ed for taking the time to write down some of his thoughts. It's actually pretty easy and please keep in mind that we will present a \$100 gift certificate from LL Bean to the person with the best original article that is published for the 2001 season (articles will be judged by the Editorial Committee). Please contact me or Melinda about submitting your thoughts or ideas. I'm looking forward to Ed's next article.

See you all at the meetings!

Darrin Batsky



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initiated with a 1 lb. N/M starter fertilizer and the 0.1 lb. N/M treatment tank mixed with Primo resulted in the most consistent green speeds among the fertilized plots, yielding green speed variations greater than 6" on only three occasions. The 0.1 lb. N/M treatment initiated with a 1 lb. N/M natural organic and the 1 lb. N/M Methex + Primo treatment varied by 6" or more four times. The 0.1 lb. N/M every ten days had the most inconsistent green speed of any of the foliar treatments with 6 of the 14 dates resulting in green speed changes of 6" or more. The 1 lb. N/M Methex treatment and the 1 lb. N/M urea treatment varied by 6" or more 6 and 7 times, respectively.

Dollar spot data was collected twice during the study by counting the number of dollar spots per plot. No statistical significance between any of treatments occurred regarding dollar spot. We believe this was due to the large amount of variation between plots independent of treatment. However, a general trend existed toward less dollar spot on plots receiving less nitrogen.

Conclusions

The 0.1 lb. N/M every ten days treatment without any additional nitrogen application in the spring produced unacceptable turfgrass quality. The 0.1 lb. N/M treatment also produced the most inconsistent green speeds of the four foliar treatments in the study.

Previous studies have suggested that increasing nitrogen decreases the occurrence of dollar spot. However, we noticed that low nitrogen plots had the least dollar spot, but we are not certain if this was a result of fertility regime or the inability to observe dollar spots because of an already thin, weak turf.

Both 0.1 lb. N/M turfs that were initiated with a pound of nitrogen in the spring had acceptable quality for the majority of the season and produced consistently fast green speeds. It is worth noting that the 0.04 fl. oz./M Primo + 0.1 lb. N/M treatment also produced consistent green speed and acceptable quality ratings.

Our research suggests that a spoon-feeding program should be enhanced with additional nitrogen applications in either the spring and lot the fall of each season to achieve acceptable turfgrass quality. The data suggest that the greens will not lose any noticeable speed due to supplementing with a spring feeding and that they may be more consistent for the duration of the season.

The complete results of this study will be published in a future issue of Golf Course Management.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Jon Bristol and Aaron Hathaway for their technical assistance in this study. We would also like to acknowledge The Anderson's, Novartis, Turfgrass Inc., and Turf Partners for donating materials to make this study possible.

Treatment	Source	Rate/1000 sq. ft.	Interval	Method
1	Methex 40-0-0	1.0 lbs. N	30 days	Granular
2	Urea 46-0-0	1.0 lbs. N	30 days	Granular
3	14-28-10	1.0 lbs. N	April 28th	Granular
4	6-2-0	1.0 lbs. N	April 28th	Granular
5	28-7-14	0.1 lbs. N	10 days	Foliar
6	Untreated			
7	28-7-14	0.01 lbs. N	10 days	Foliar
8	Methex 40-0-0	1.0 lbs. N	30 days	Granular

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ROAMIN' AROUND THE GCSAA by - Ed Keil, Superintendent Lehman GC

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) was founded in 1926 based on a pledge to build an association to inform and educate its membership and strive for the betterment of the greenskeepers future. Today GCSAA'S mission statement still reflects that commitment. The mission of the GCSAA is "To serve its members, advance its profession and enrich the quality of golf and its environment." Today the GCSAA has over 21,000 members in more than 60 countries around the world. The membership is made up of superintendents, golf course employees, students, educators and individuals who represent related turfgrass industries. Ninety-six percent of employers include GCSAA dues in their superintendents' benefit package.

GCSAA History Lesson, The 1920's: The National Association of Greenskeepers of America (NAGA) was formed in 1926 by Colonel John Morley and sixty greenskeepers at the Sylvania Country Club in Toledo, Ohio. In 1927, the first issue of *The National Greenskeeper* was published in Cleveland, Ohio establishing the first line of communication among golf course superintendents. Seventy-five members of the NAGA met in Chicago for the first annual meeting. The year 1928 brought an educational component to the NAGA annual conference, with 14 turfgrass experts addressing 350 registrants. Twenty-seven exhibitors showed the latest trends in maintenance equipment. In 1929, there were 5,648 golf courses in the United States, an average increase of approximately 600 new courses per year since 1923.

The GCSAA held its 72nd International Golf Course Show and Conference in February in Dallas, Texas. Tommy Witt CGCS, of the Kiawah Island Club, South Carolina, was elected President for 2001. Changes to the bylaws in the highly controversial Professional Development Initiative (PDI) were approved, 5800 to 1924. The PDI change will provide new standards for Class A members effective July 1, 2003. Existing Class A, B and C members will be grandfathered and therefore not required to meet all new standards. Future Class A members will be required to meet the following:

- ◆ a recommended level of formal education, experience and continuing education
- ◆ an appropriate state pesticide license
- ◆ fifty hours of continuing education and service every five years for renewal

Incoming President Witt stated: "By passing the standards for Class A members, GCSAA members have made a statement to the industry that we are committed to taking bold steps to enable us to advance our profession by improving recognition, potential higher compensation and additional job opportunities."

Some of the other highlights of the conference and show included:

- 2001 USGA Green Section Award to Patricia Cobb, a retired turfgrass insect specialist
- Penn State University winning the 7th annual Collegiate Turf Bowl
- GCSAA membership topped 21,000, up 58% from 1994 (13,000)
- for the 6th year in a row, show attendance topped 20,000 and 727 exhibitors covered 275,000 sq. ft. of floor space—a far cry from the first conference in 1927

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TEN WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP

"Great champions have an enormous sense of pride. The people who excel are those who are driven to show the world — and prove to themselves — just how good they are."

— Nancy Lopez

1. Avoid behavior that communicates that you lack self-confidence. Body language such as minimal or intimidating eye contact, poor posture, or too many or too few gestures will invariably harm your credibility. Take care to avoid using gestures that are jerky, sudden, or noisy, which may send a message that you lack confidence.
2. Be equally nice to everyone. **Know** and **use** people's names from your newest member or golfer to the most senior, influential ones. Never pass people without making eye contact, waving, and/or speaking.
3. You **are** the expert, so be comfortable showcasing your talent and demonstrating your competence!

"Talent is a gift. Competence isn't. Competence is something one must do, one must work at — sometimes joyfully, always persistently- and perceptively, realizing where one's strengths and weaknesses lie."

— Eugene Griessman, *The Achievement Factors*

4. Think before you react. Prudently choose your response to people and situations.

"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anyone else expects of you. Never excuse yourself."

— Henry Ward Beecher

5. Volunteer for projects and demonstrate initiative by taking on additional responsibility. A phrase like this is music to your manager's or Board's/Committee's ears: "I'd like to tackle that one; it sounds like a great opportunity."
6. Anticipate industry gossip; listen to it, but stay noncommittal. Don't spend your energy trying to eliminate rumors unless they are severe enough to damage your credibility.

TWO-STEP Approach to Squelching Rumors and Handling Gossip:

A. "Did I actually see it happen? Do I know it to be true?"

B. "Is this my news to tell and is it "nice" news to repeat? Would the subject of this rumor or gossip give me permission to pass it on?"

7. Accept praise graciously and willingly simply by acknowledging it with a confident "thank you!" Apologize without qualification when necessary. Here are examples of apologies with qualifications: "I'm sorry if you heard..." or "I'm sorry, but I do feel I was..."; "I suppose I should apologize to you" or "_____ says that I owe you an apology"

"An apology is the sign of a secure leader."

— Byrd Baggett

8. Practice the art of politeness and courtesy and, when in doubt, defer to the formal side of etiquette and protocol.
9. Strive for excellence!

"Remember, excellence is not optional."

— H. Jackson Brown, Jr., *Life's Little Treasure Book on Success*

10. Believe in yourself.

"If you accept the expectations of others, especially negative ones, then you will never change the outcome."

— Michael Jordan, *For the Love of the Game (Crown)*

— Adapted from: Lisa Micunek's, *Enhancing the Image of the Golf Course Superintendent and Golf Industry Professionals Part I*. (The author is a GCSAA seminar instructor and the president of Accent on Success, a firm specializing in etiquette & protocol.)



EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT ASSOCIATED WITH CATARACT FORMATION



PARIS, FRANCE - Sunlight exposure appears to play a role in increasing the risk of cataract formation, according to an article appearing in the March issue of the Archives of Ophthalmology, a member of the Journal of the American Medical Association family of journals.

The researchers studied 2,584 residents of Sète in southern France to evaluate the relationship of ambient solar radiation and professional and leisure exposures to light to different types of cataracts.

The researchers found high ambient solar radiation is associated with a 2.5-fold increased risk of cortical cataracts and a 4.0-fold increased risk of mixed cataracts. High ambient solar radiation also was associated with a 2.9-fold increased risk of cataract surgery.

"It seems that sunlight exposure throughout a lifetime may be important to cataract formation," the authors conclude. "These results raise the hope that simple preventive strategies, such as avoiding exposure at midday, may reduce the prevalence of cataracts."

According to background information cited in the study, cataract is the leading cause of blindness, accounting for 50 percent of blindness worldwide. In the United States, cataract surgery has become the most frequent surgical procedure in people 65 years or older, with an estimated cost to Medicare of \$3.4 billion in 1991.

This study was supported by the Institute National de la Sante et de la Recherche Médicale, Paris, France; by grants from the Foundation de France, Department of Epidemiology of Ageing, Paris, the Region Languedoc-Roussillon, Montpellier, France, the Foundation pour la Recherche Médicale, Paris, and the Association Retina-France, Toulouse; and by financial support from Rhône-Poulenc, Essilor, and the Centre de Recherche et d'Information Nutritionnelles, Paris.

Adapted from - URL: <http://www.pslgroup.com/dg/ll6.htm>, Doctor's Guide; March 15, 2000

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A message from your golf course superintendent and GCSAA



April Meeting Superintendent Profile ...

Kelly Kressler - Southmoore Golf Course

Through hard work and dedication, Kelly Kressler has implemented a successful management program from the very beginning stages at the Southmoore Golf Course. This is very evident since one of Kelly's most notable achievements is the successful grow-in of this golf course in only six months. The course was seeded in the fall of 1993 and was opened the spring of 1994. The course designer is Jim Blaukovich, a popular architect in the Lehigh Valley and much of southeastern Pennsylvania. Southmoore is an 18-hole, public golf course located in Bath, Pennsylvania. The course yardage exceeds 6,200 yards and plays to a challenging par of 71. The turfgrass varieties throughout this layout include a ryegrass / bluegrass mix for fairways, ryegrass tees, and bentgrass greens. Kelly and his crew of twelve are easing into the growing season with routine maintenance duties as they deal with slow, but improving weather conditions.

Mr. Kressler is no stranger to the golf course management industry. His 20 years of maintenance experience on golf courses complemented by his educational background, a two-year degree from the Rutgers Turfgrass Management Program, help make him a model Golf Course Superintendent. Some of his other work history includes an Assistant Superintendent role at the Center Valley Golf Club under former Pocono Turfgrass Association President, Ron Garrison. He also proved himself as a valuable employee while working as a foreman at the River Highland Golf Club in Connecticut.

The role he serves as Golf Course Superintendent is preceded by another honorable position of being a true family man. He has been married to his wife, Renee, for 10 years, and has two children. When Kelly does have free time away from the golf course, he always includes his two sons, Cody, who is 8 years old, and Derek, who is 4 years old. He considers golf a leisure time activity, but truly values this time for quality family time.

This Berwick, Pennsylvania native has learned a tremendous amount in life and in this profession. He has initiated an all purpose philosophy of "Keeping everything in perspective, while providing conditions to best serve the customers who visit his golf club." With the success Kelly has achieved, at both professional and family levels, it is easy to say, he will be a long-term contributor to his family and this industry.

— by Jeff Koch

Educational Committee Update...

We've changed our approach to hopefully improve the attendance at the monthly golf meetings. Last year we brought in speakers that covered an array of topics in hopes to attract members. However, the turnout was bleak. This year we're eliminating the educational part of the meeting so you can come out and enjoy the day with just food and golf. It's possible there may be a short presentation, but this will help lower the cost of the meetings. Steve Chirip, our new golf committee chairman, is setting up a lunch sponsorship for vendors that will provide us with a brief, show and tell, of their product.

I'd like to thank Jim MacLaren for the fine job he did with the inaugural PTGA/Simplot Partners winter educational meeting that was held at Split Rock Lodge back in March. For next years meeting we'd like to revamp the agenda to provide the membership with more hands-on, practical knowledge and still provide you with obtaining pesticide credits. If you have any suggestions let me know, also we are looking for volunteers for the educational committee, so if you're interested please contact me.

Thanks,
Jason Barndt

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POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO
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PTGA would like to welcome the following New Members

Dennis E. DeSanctis, Student, Rutgers University

Dan Tanto, Class C, Valley Country Club

Jeffrey Feick, Class B, Glen Brook Golf Club

Jason Witcraft, Class B, Country Club of the Poconos

Jeffrey Hugaboom, Class C, The Country Club at Woodloch Springs

Andrew Dumas, Class A, CGCS, Silver Creek Country Club

(Continued from page 4)

A survey by 990 superintendents at the show provided us with the following information:

- 19% use recycled water
- 45% selected drought as the most feared weather related condition
- 60% said grubs are the most threatening pests
- 41% felt computers are the most useful personal technology
- 65% selected computerized irrigation as the top golf course technology
- 48% considered Tiger Woods as the most influential person in golf

The GCSAA will sponsor Senior PGA Tour professional Jim Colbert for the 2001 season. Colbert will have the GCSAA logo on his shirt and bag, and will make special appearances on behalf of the GCSAA. Upon signing the agreement, Colbert stated "The GCSAA is first class and has made tremendous advances for its members and the golf industry. As a player and a businessman, other than myself no person is more critical to my success than the golf course superintendent." Upon winning the SBC Senior Classic on March 11th Colbert pulled a blank check out of his wallet, filled it out and handed it to Wayne Mills, Superintendent at Valencia (Calif.) Country Club. Spend it on the crew. Mills was told. Mills declined to disclose the amount of the check. **What a nice touch on Colbert's part.**



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