

PURPOSE: To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

FROM THE FILES: PONDS - I was asked recently if the fountains used in ponds are an effective means of controlling algae and weeds. I can answer that with a qualified yes. Yes, if the pond is 5 feet or more deep. If you do not expect too large an area to be weed and algae free. Almost all superintendents I have visited with that have tried them have been happy with them.

White amurs also have been very successful. They tend to escape from ponds in dammed up streams and thus are not as effective in that type of location. Ponds need to be adequately stocked for good control of weeds and even than control is seldom adequate the first year. Often some of the fish can be removed the third or fourth year if pond was adequately stocked the first year.

I recently suggested sand bags as a means of covering up the plastic pond liner exposed at the edge of a pond. Destruction of pond liners at the edge of the pond are the most common reason for problems with plastic liners. I also suggested someone try geotextile with gabions on top to protect the shore line and liner edge.

Does anybody have any other ideas for stopping the destruction of pond liners at the edge of ponds?

-----  
FAIRY RING A CONTROL AT LAST ? Many superintendents are reporting Bayleton will control fairy ring on greens. They are applying 1 ounce per thousand square feet at two week intervals for three applications. This when started in early June seems to give season long control.

-----  
TURFCOMMS is published at unpredictable intervals by the editor and publisher:

Douglas T. Hawes, Ph D  
Certified Professional Agronomist  
Specializing in Golf Course  
Maintenance Consulting

2408 Roundrock Trail  
Plano, Texas 75075  
(214) 867-0176

Subscription cost is \$10

MILORGANITE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GREENS - I have been recommending Milorganite for both the organic matter and the nutrients needed for establishment in new sand green or tee mixes. That's correct no organic matter other than Milorganite. Worse yet for a 6 year exUSGA agronomist - no off site mixing. Most of my customers feel that can't afford off site mixing. This is a method they can afford and it works. Milorganite is alot easier to rotatill into sand than peat is.

This is not an original idea on my part. I got it indirectly from a golf course architect. The rate is 100 to 200 pounds per thousand square feet. The upper rate is perfect for bermudagrass establishment. For bentgrass one needs to vary the rate depending upon the time of year. Soil temperatures are what you need to consider. If you are seeding a new green in Omaha, Nebraska the first of September or latter in the fall 200 is okay. If for some reason you were to seed it in the spring 200 would be too much available nitrogen for bentgrass that first summer. So put in 100 pounds and add the second hundred a little at a time as needed.

Milorganite must be amended with a potassium source. I prefer potassium sulfate(sulfate of potash) at 6 pounds per thousand.

-----  
PENNCROSS VS SEASIDE: In most of the U.S. the question probably is which should I use for seeding my greens Penncross or Penneagle? Not in west Texas, Seaside is quite often the preferred choice. Why? I'm not quite sure. Penncross greens have performed very well there.

The only advantage of Seaside over Penncross is a slightly better tolerance to high soluble salt concentrations. But for seeding new greens in west Texas Seaside must be considered a very weak sister to Penncross. Seaside has poor tolerance to heat, and close mowing. Some old Seaside greens in west Texas seem to be okay if you don't mind the patchiness. However, most Seaside greens I have encountered in that area have a very high proportion of Poa annua.

I do not recommend Penneagle or Emerald in the southern part of the region I cover. The lack of heat tolerance and the lack of successful testing in this area are the reasons I have for not recommending these cultivars.

As a review for most of you, Penncross seed are the results of crossings between three superior selections planted vegetatively in the seed fields. The resulting plants have excellent disease and heat tolerance. Penncross is a moderately aggressive creeping bentgrass spreading rapidly after establishment by stolons. It has done well in west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and southern California where high salts and heat are a problem. Penncross putting greens do need good drainage but, so do Seaside greens.

Seaside seed is harvested from wild stands in coastal areas of Washington and Oregon. The resulting seed have a wider genetic makeup than Penncross. However one must remember the parents are those plants best adapted to seed fields of the cool humid Northwest. When planted the plants exhibit their tremendous genetic diversity. A very large number die the first summer under dry west Texas conditions an equally large number succumb to diseases and close mowing. A very small number of plants are well adapted to the conditions encountered. Why wait ten years for these survivors to produce a good green.

After 10 to 20 years a green does develop that has patches 1 to 3 feet across of adapted plants. Each patch is the turf produced by one seedling over that 10 to 20 year period. I have brought samples of several of these patches back to the plant breeder at Texas A & M in the hope that eventually a creeping bentgrass with superior characteristics can be produced for the Southwest. However, most golf course superintendents and researchers in the Southwest find Penncross to be the most superior bentgrass available.

Penneagle is a new cultivar of creeping bentgrass produced using similar procedures as those used for Penncross. The parents are different and the resulting turf has improved ability to take a close height of cut. However, it appears to be less heat tolerant and is more difficult establish.

-----  
EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT - I have suggested to many clubs that the superintendent work up the cost new of replacing every item in his equipment inventory. This is a good winter task in the northern U.S. Then consider that the average life of the equipment is about 10 years. That life will be longer as you go north from Kansas City and shorter to the south. Then therefore realize that you should be spending for replacement 10% of the total cost of all new equipment each year. Or put aside what ever money not thus spent for the following year.

This approach serves two useful purposes. First, it provides them with a figure of what the equipment for a totally equipped golf course cost. Some figures I've seen exceed \$300,000 for an 18 hole course. Secondly, it gives them a nice simple rule they need to follow.

-----  
HOW ARE SAND TOPDRESSING PROGRAMS FARING: Eleven years ago Madison and Davis published their article on sand topdressing in the Record. That seems to have been the start of sand topdressing programs in the United States. I joined those in favor of such programs soon after that and have stayed on that side ever since. So perhaps my reply below should be considered biased. The club the statement below was addressed to has been on the program for the last six years. My reply to them can be made to most clubs that made the switch to sand topdressing and stayed with it.

I was asked to comment on how the sand topdressing program was faring. It is in part responsible for your present excellent putting surfaces. I think it is safe to say that before embarking on the sand topdressing program it would have been impossible to routinely maintain greens as smooth, firm and fast as yours presently are thru the summer months.

You have built up 1 & 1/2 inches of sand that has a good percentage of organic matter in it. The organic matter comes from old grass roots and stems. This is not a pure sand layer. It also has a small amount of silt and clay in it. The silt and clay have blown in over the last five years. Together these ingredients have produced an ideal putting green mix sitting on top of a very poor putting green mix. There are two problems associated with sandy mixes, one of these, more localized dry spots. You are already dealing with these. The other is nematodes.

Nematodes are always present irregardless of the mix. They are just more numerous in sandy mixes. The better air movement in these mixes favors grass roots and nematodes.

If the greens fail to respond to normal fertilizer and fungicide applications try Nematicure. This nematicide is safe on bentgrass greens used according to label instructions. Some courses with a sandy mix and some that have been on a sand topdressing program for a long time have had enormous benefits from yearly applications of this material. Once you are forced to use Nematicure it appears you may have to use it every year. Therefore I suggest using it only as a last resort.

Conclusion, the sand topdressing fares well for your greens. Keep at it. Soon you will have enough sand accumulated so that you can work back into the greens your aerifier cores rather than haul them off. Jack, if you wish equal space it is yours. Anybody else?

-----  
ALKALIGRASS (PUCCINELLIA SPP.) - Since 1980 I have been impressed with the potential of this grass. Two golf courses I visit in the western Dakotas have this grass for the turf surface on tees. At one time both had practice putting greens of it. I have also seen it in putting greens in New Mexico at about 5,000 feet. The course that has been irrigating fairways the longest of the above two has about 50% alkaligrass fairways. The soil pH is 9.2 to 9.6. Both courses have lousy water quality, high sodium and high dissolved solids.

Alkaligrass makes a decent gray-green fairway and teeing surface. However, it is a slow grower and does not recover from divots as fast as creeping bentgrass. Yet in two years a tee sodded to Kentucky bluegrass and then overseeded to Fults alkaligrass will be 90% alkaligrass on these two courses. It does respond favorably to topdressing. Even at a 1/4 height it produces a solid although thin stand. It produces a much more acceptable density at 1/2 to 1 inch height of cut.