

TURFCOMMS



V. 4, I. 7

SEPT. 11, '88

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

PHONE ANSWERING MACHINES - As many of you know I have one of those devices we all love to hate. Some of us find it hard to do without them though.

I sure could have done without mine today (Aug. 31). As I came into the house I heard the tail end of someone leaving a message. I could not get to the phone in time, but much more frustrating -- when I went to play back the tape there was no message on it. My machine had failed. And some poor guy is out there waiting for me to return his call. Believe me I would if I could!!!

VERTIDRAIN FOR THE THIRD TIME - MORE: In the last issue the amounts of soil that could be brought to the surface using one inch diameter hollow tines was presented. Well, I just learned that one inch hollow tines for that machine only have a nine inch long tine. Therefore the maximum soil that could be brought to the surface is 2.7 cu. yds./1000 sq. ft. That still would make for a few truck loads of soil to be hauled away and the same for the sand to be hauled back.

One advantage of using one inch hollow tines would be where establishment on fairways and roughs had resulted in a very uneven surface. All that soil brought to the surface would, when broken up make for a great topdressing to help fill in the low areas.

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. Send checks to Doug Hawes at the above address.

HIGH POTASSIUM: When I first started looking into high potassium levels as a means of keeping championship putting greens day in and day out I heard a number of pluses and negatives. Well one visit recently to a high potassium user's course convinced me that one of the negatives I heard from an East Coast turf professor was perhaps valid. This East Coast professor said, "high rates were going to keep the *Poa annua* alive." I'm coming to believe that he was correct. Perhaps that is not all bad for many of you.

High levels of potassium, levels greater than four % of the soil's base (or cation) exchange, appear to do an excellent job of helping *Poa annua* and bentgrass survive stress. Where clippings are removed, such levels are only obtained after a concentrated effort to apply more potassium than nitrogen.

I have not become negative about high potassium, but don't YOU expect high potassium to make it easier for you to get rid of *Poa annua*. It may well do the reverse. What high potassium levels in the soil appears to do is make it much easier to manage any turf species under stress conditions. Which makes your job easier. The golfer doesn't care whether he is putting on bent or *Poa*. He can't tell the difference unless the *Poa* is seeding. So stop it from seeding.

ALPINE GOLF COURSES - (courses at or above 6400 feet in elev.)
Over the last ten years it has been fun to journey up into the mountains and see a different set of challenges against a majestic skyline. Over that ten years I have made one to many consultation visits to nine alpine courses. I've spent some time visiting and talking with the superintendents on five other courses. And, while preparing this list talked to several more of the superintendents at such facilities over the phone. This is thus written not by an expert, but by a very interested observer.

Maintenance of alpine golf courses offers its own set of challenges. The growing and golf season is short. Night temperatures in the summer are very cool. From 9000 feet up a frost can be expected any night of the summer. The short playing and growing season puts a lot of pressure on the superintendent to avoid any loss of turf.

At all but one of the golf courses visited the turf has an abundance of intense sunshine from late spring till the first fall snow. Thatch accumulates quite rapidly, in part because of the bright sunshine and partly because of the low soil temperatures. Summer growth of cool season grasses is excellent during June, July and August. That time of year is something like spring in most of the northern U.S. of A. Soil temperatures never get warm enough for good microbial decomposition. Daytime

conditions are usually dry enough to discourage the microbial growth necessary for decomposition at the soil thatch interface.

Those dry, sunny conditions make it nice as far as summer diseases are concerned. These are a rarity, unless you count fairy ring. Fairy ring type organisms often do spoil otherwise perfect turf. The fungi that cause fairy ring live in the ample thatch.

But, the real disease problem is a result of the long period of snow cover. Snow molds are very much feared diseases. For this reason you see very few bentgrass tees and essentially no bentgrass fairways.

Poa annua is very common on courses ten or more years old. Where protected by snow mold control fungicides it behaves as a perennial. On fairways and unprotected tees it behaves almost like a summer annual. It is often killed by snow mold in the winter but, germinates early in the spring and is soon setting seed thru the rest of the growing season.

Dandelion, thistles and a few other broadleaf weeds do occur. Insect pests are seldom seen, and when present do little damage compared to what happens at lower altitudes. Mice, elk and other animals sometimes do a lot of winter damage. As does man on skis and snow mobiles.

Labor and management is often ski resort personnel. Many of the courses are owned and operated by the same companies that run the ski resorts and on the same land.

Alpine golf course management is somewhat different than management at courses around the country. It has its own advantages and difficulties. If your looking for such a position - forget it! There is very little turnover and much demand for such positions.

If the reader is interested I have a partial list of courses in the U.S. found at or above 6400 feet that I would be glad to send on request.

GREAT LADY DEFILED - Visited my favorite lady early this summer. What a shock! She was all painted up with lines down the middle of one fairway for a longest and straightest drive contest and circles on the greens for gimme putts. YUK!!!

It was really a shame to see such a great lady so badly defiled. It was enough to make me wonder if I still wanted to be a member at Prairie Dunes.

TURF TECH

By

Jonathon L. Scott, CGCS

With the tremendous variety of computers available today, the task of selecting one that best meets your needs without breaking the budget seems, at best, impossible. Yet, it is this very variety that will save you money, if you know what to look for. Last newsletter I wrote of the basic components necessary for putting together a computer system that will serve you well in most situations. The heart of this system is, of course, the computer itself. It's sort of like the amplifier in a stereo system. The speakers, turntables, tape players, etc., are all useless without the amplifier, and even though they may be of high quality, their output is no better than the quality of the amplifier. So it goes with a computer system. Buy a cheap central processor, or computer, and all the fancy disk drives, monitors, modems, and printers will only work as good or as fast as the CPU (Central Processing Unit).

You probably have heard the new computers advertised in terms of "clock speed" or just plain "speed". These terms describe the relative ability of the computer's CPU to process information from the various inputs including programs, data, keyboard, monitors, and printers. Clock speed is measured in megahertz or Mhz, and for comparison, the old IBM-PC's and their clones operate at 5-6 mhz. Now, believe me, compared to my old Apple IIe running Appledos 2.0, this is lightning! So, what is the meaning of speed? Well, to put it simply, speed is the amount of patience you are willing to exercise while waiting for the computer to do something you want. If you are working with large spreadsheets or very large data bases, you better have something else to do while the computer at 6 mhz does it's work. On the other hand, if all you are doing is telecommunication and small (by big business standards) budget spreadsheets, a PC type with an 8086 processor will do just fine. What is the advantage of this? Cost will be higher for more speed, lower for less. An 8086 machine can be had for under \$1,000, complete. A comparably equipped 8286 processor operating at 8-12 mhz will cost over \$2,000. A lightning-fast 8386 processor running at 16-20+ mhz will cost \$3,500 to \$5,000 for just a basic system. With this kind of a spread, you better know what your needs are when buying a CPU. A certain amount of patience will buy you a lot of accessories.

Next month we'll take a closer look at speed in relation to your needs. Until then, watch Computer Chronicles on PBS.

END