

EASING THE PAIN OF CORE AERATION

TEN TIPS FOR QUICKER RECOVERY

Pat Gross, director, Southwest Region



The application of dry topdressing sand to a clean, dry turf surface helps the material readily move into aeration holes. If topdressing sand is moist, allowing it to sit on the surface of the green for an hour or more often provides enough drying time.

Core aerating putting greens is a lot like going to the dentist. We know it is necessary a few times each year, but we hope the experience is as quick and painless as possible. Although core aeration temporarily diminishes putting quality, the short-lived pain results in a long-term gain for turf health by reducing thatch and organic matter levels, relieving soil compaction, increasing soil oxygen levels, and stimulating healthy root growth. Golfers begrudgingly understand these benefits but wonder why it sometimes takes so long for putting greens to recover. Core aerating greens will always result in some disruption, but there are steps that can be taken to help the greens recover as quickly as possible.

There are dozens of methods superintendents use to aerate greens, the most popular being 1/2-inch-diameter hollow tines, commonly referred to as conventional coring, but there are also small, pencil-sized hollow tines, highpressure injection of water and/or sand, large-diameter drills, and many others involving tines, knives, or blades of varying shapes and sizes. Each procedure has its own benefits, and it should be up to the superintendent to decide which method is best based on the prevailing climate, conditions, and aeration goals for a particular golf facility. For the purpose of this article, only the standard practice of core aeration using 1/2-inch-diameter hollow tines or larger will be discussed, along with 10 useful tips to get the maximum benefit from the procedure and restore smooth putting surfaces as quickly as possible.

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SHADES OF GREEN

A FEW POINTS ON THE ART OF MANAGING NON-OVERSEEDED ULTRADWARF GREENS

Paul Vermeulen, director of competitions agronomy, PGA Tour



The use of colorants or painting of ultradwarf bermudagrass putting greens during the winter has many advantages compared to the old practice of overseeding.

During the past few years winter golfers in the southern portion of the country have seen a growing number of courses with nonoverseeded ultradwarf bermudagrass greens. And, while a few industry analysts have associated this trend with the lingering recession and a means of cutting costs, a stronger motivation for its popularity is that superintendents are producing healthier, more consistent year-round conditions with fewer inputs. If the trend continues over the next few years, overseeded greens will become a rare sight seen mostly at heavily played resorts and prominent tournament sites.

With the birth of any new trend comes the opportunity to share observations on the finer points of golf course management. In this instance, much has already been written on the technical aspects of managing nonoverseeded greens. In fact, with access to the

Internet one can easily find a wealth of scientific information pertaining to varietal attributes, pest control, nutrient management, etc. In this article, I would like to pass along a few points on the art of managing non-overseeded greens that may help others on the ever-winding road to success.

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REGRASSING COOL SEASON PUTTING GREENS WITH SOD

AN OLD CONCEPT WITH A NEW TWIST SPARKS NEW INTEREST IN REGRASSING GREENS FOR NORTHERN GOLF FACILITIES IN THE U.S. AND CANADA

Jim Skorulski, senior agronomist, Northeast Region



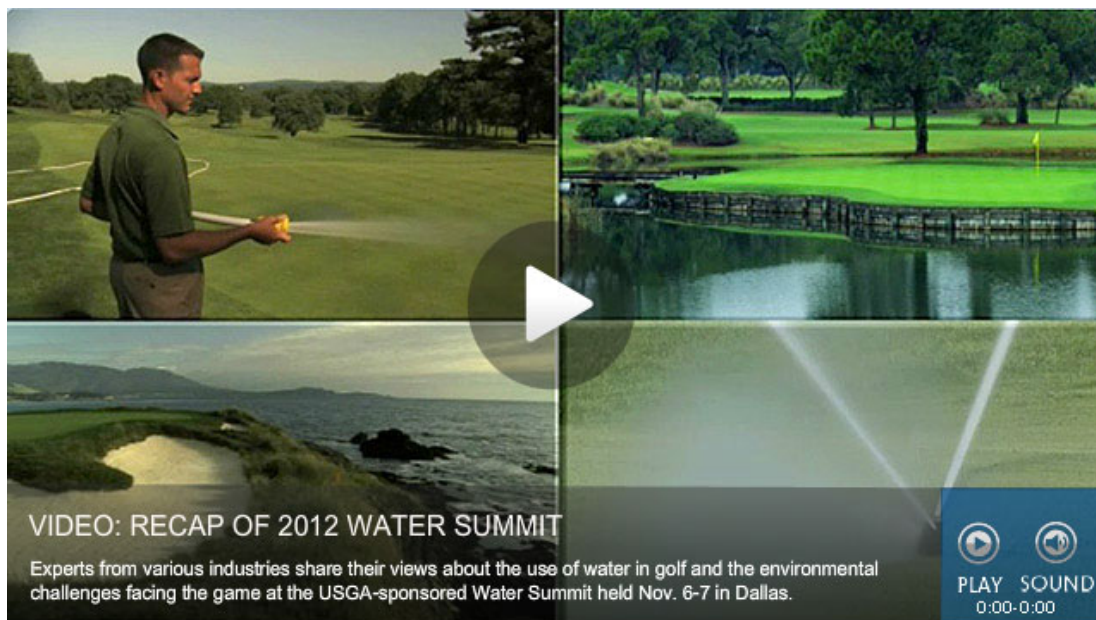
The quality of sod, whether washed or grown on sand that meets USGA recommendations, is critical to establishment and success of the project.

Regrassing putting greens was once looked upon as an interesting concept that was suited primarily for high budget golf facilities with members willing to tolerate the process. Convincing northern golfers on the merits of shutting down their golf course in early to mid-August and then opening the following spring to provide a monostand of creeping bentgrass was never an easy sell. Recently, however, there has been renewed interest in regrassing and rebuilding cool-season putting greens - and for good reason! New bentgrass cultivars are durable and provide excellent playing conditions over a wide range of weather and moisture conditions. Annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), on the other hand, is far less reliable in that it is highly vulnerable to annual bluegrass weevil and disease pathogens combined with poor heat and cold tolerance.

This equates to high management costs and many sleepless nights for those that manage it. The growing availability of quality commercial bentgrass sod and

renewed confidence in its use has also made regrassing programs a more practical option in cooler climates where a disruption in play for any reason is not popular. Golf facilities that have successfully regrassed or rebuilt greens are rewarded with much improved and reliable playing surfaces that can be managed consistently firmer and faster. This article will take a closer look at the regrassing concept and how it might be more applicable to your golf facility than you think.

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