

end. This is because our bermudagrass does not come out of the cool weather very well primarily due to our nematode populations and shade. We keep the overseeding as long as possible without impeding the growth of the bermudagrass. We do lower the height of cut gradually, and brush, verti-groom and vertical mow, but we have never used any herbicides to take out our overseeding. We also do a lot of hand watering of the hot spots to prevent premature thinning before the bermudagrass is actively growing.

Buddy Keene

Southwest Florida Weather is the Wild Card in Game Of Overseeding



"It was the coldest, wettest, busiest winter with the quickest spring warm up we've ever had."

- Stuart Taylor, GCS

Transition woes this spring had Stuart Taylor

of the Riverwood GC in Port Charlotte scratching his head in disbelief. Says Taylor, "We used the same cultural practices we have used successfully the past five years and we used the same Poa trivialis (75 percent) and bentgrass (25 percent) blend that we used and liked last year."

So what was the difference?

"There was an immense difference in the weather this year. We have been averaging 10 frosts a year the last few years. This year we had 30 frosts. The winter was wetter.

Riverwood Overseeding Practices

Preparation

- Verticut greens 3 ways.
- Verticut tees and fairways 2 ways
- Scalp roughs

Seeding Rates

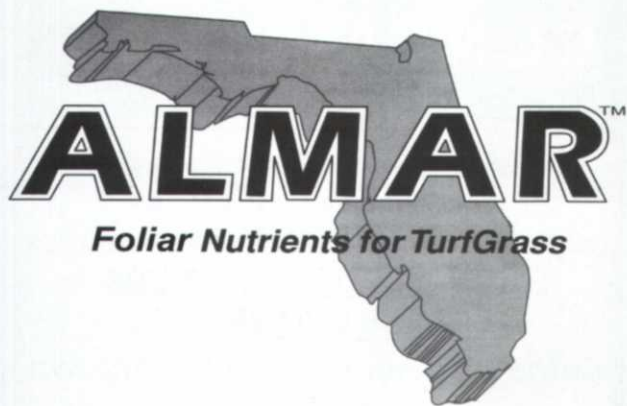
- Greens 8 lbs/M Poa trivialis/bentgrass blend (75%/25%)
- Tees 400 lbs/A; Fairways 320 lbs/A; Roughs 210 lbs/A

We had 25 inches more rainfall than normal, and we had more traffic than ever as we experienced our busiest winter season ever with around 240 rounds a day. It didn't get much better going into spring. We had frost on April 1st and seven days later it was 85 degrees. The grass didn't know whether to come or go. It was very difficult to manage since the conditions were so atypical and changeable"

The transition frustration for Taylor was magnified by the fact that he felt like he had a great overseeding establishment. "Everything looked great in the fall. The seed went down smoothly, germinated and grew in. For nine months beginning in September, we had the best greens we've ever had, and then for 30 days beginning in May we've had the worst greens in five years. They are coming around now.

"We are on the frost line on the west coast. Thirty miles south and maybe overseeding could be optional, but we are also a development course so aesthetics are a critical issue year round for real estate sales and member satisfaction. So, overseeding is not optional. The trade-off is the members are kept informed and we brought in the USGA to also help explain transition problems."

"Some of our worst areas were on



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greens that came back with the best soil tests. Some of the thin areas were problematic since they were on shady greens to begin with. Others thin spots tended to occur in hydrophobic areas. To address this we are going to aerify with 3/4" hollow tines and topdress with a sand and Profile mix for more uniform moisture control along with a program of using Cascade and other wetting agent materials."

Stuart Taylor

Central-Northeast Programs Haven't Responded to Milder Winters



"This year reminded me of the winters of the 70s and 80s."

- Butch Singo, Harrell's, Inc.

Butch Singo is a sales representative for the Harrell's Fertilizer Company, and his territory runs from Kissimmee to

Jacksonville. I asked Butch his take on this year's overseeding challenges.

"Overseeding programs have not changed much in my territory in response to the mild winters," he said. "As usual, some courses experienced rougher transitions than others. Most of my customers know that the weather can be unpredictable and cause havoc to playing conditions in the winter without the insurance of overseeding."

"Successful establishment was very weather dependent as usual. Those who tended to go early in the fall had better luck than those who were scheduled later and got caught when the rainy weather hit and washed a lot of seed away. Mild weather early belied the density of the overseeding and when the severe cold weather hit and the bermudagrass went dormant, people found out much or how little seed they really had established."

This year really reminded me of the winters I experienced as a superintendent in the 70s and 80s when we would typically have 20-30 frosts a year. A lot of superintendents and golfers haven't seen those kinds of winters in a long time and golfers often have short memories. Now since the second week in May, we've had high temperatures and low humidity, causing the overseeding to check

out too quickly and everyone is scrambling to push the bermudagrass to fill in as quickly as possible."

Butch Singo

West-Northwest Down Time is Nice; Preparation is Real Key To Success



"Preparation is the key to success."

- John Cunningham, GCS

John Cunningham, GCS at Black Diamond Ranch in Lecanto had the luxury of closing his course for two weeks to prepare and

overseed his courses. Black Diamond isn't the only club to recognize the importance of providing proper agronomic conditions to manage the turf, but it is rare. Some public-access courses and resorts simply can't shut down for more than a day or two, but clubs need to take a hard look at short-term convenience versus

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