

Bunker rake blower used successfully for greens root aeration

By TERRY BUCHEN

NAPLES, Fla. — A new portable turf aeration blower system can supply oxygen to the root zone of putting greens, suck water out of a green's drainage pipes, and even blow away surface debris in sand bunkers.

Superintendent Darren Davis of Olde Florida Golf Club here reports the versatile blower is "another great tool in our golf course maintenance equipment arsenal."

Davis has two of the self-contained blower units, which can be mounted easily onto a turf truckster bed, trailer, tractor three-point hitch, or on the back of a riding bunker rake.

The blower, he said, can move a significant amount of air through the perforated drainage piping of a U.S. Golf Association-spec putting green. This influx of oxygen to the root zone removes gases, which helps stimulate root growth and improve soil quality.

"To keep the air volume (5,000 cfm - 175 mph) on each green high enough to get our desired results," Davis said, "we isolate our greens' drainage system after it exits the green, so any excess air does not enter the surrounding drainage systems."

Olde Florida has a buried vault setup on the 15th and 18th greens, with green-colored removable plastic covers. A 4-inch-diameter slide valve is shut off during the blowing operation so no air can escape.

Next to the slide valve is a 4-inch-diameter female hose fitting that is connected to the green's subsurface drainage piping.

The blower has a 4- or 6-inch-diameter flexible ADS-type non-perforated discharge hose that is easily connected in the vault, with or without a reducer, to begin the blowing operation. It is hooked up to the blower by a 4-inch quick connect cam lock male (plastic) and female (aluminum) apparatus.

"When we wish to remove excess



Olde Florida Golf Club demonstrates the effective use of existing equipment with a separate engine-powered blower. The blower can be used elsewhere, such as to blow debris from inside a bunker.

Terry Buchen photos

water from the green's subsurface drainage piping, we simply move the 4-inch-diameter hose to the cam lock quick connect in the center of the fan housing to provide a sucking action," Davis said. "The excess water proceeds rapidly through the blower discharge outlet."

Mounted on a riding bunker rake, the blowers remove surface debris from sand bunkers prior to them being mechanically raked.

When used on the rake, the blower's electrical hookup connects to the bunker rake's battery and its fuel hookup is connected to the bunker rake's fuel tank.

When the blower is mounted to a turf truckster bed, trailer or tractor three-point hitch, there usually is a separate fuel tank and battery to operate the engine starter.

"We have been blowing our greens' subsurfaces for five years now, giving each green one to two hours per day when needed, depending on the local climatic conditions," Davis said. "We



are fortunate to be able to blow during play because our vaults are far enough away from our greens for a mostly quiet operation."

Davis is involved in construction of the neighboring Golf Club of the Everglades that Rees Jones is designing, and said: "We are installing vaults to hook up blowers on all 18 greens, the putting green and chipping green there."

Davis said the manufacturer of the

self-contained blower also makes a new electrically operated low-pressure system that can produce heated and cooled air.

Specifications include an air volume of 1,000 cfm, dual mode sucking and blowing, two 3-horsepower 230-volt motors with a power draw of 13 amps full load with a 60-amp start, quiet operation at 51 dba at 30 feet, and 4- or 6-inch outlets with quick disconnect hoses.

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Troon certified by Audubon

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. Troon Golf and Country Club has been designated a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary by the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS). Troon is the third course in Arizona and the 183rd in the world to receive this honor.

In 1998, Troon joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, which provides information and guidance to golf courses to help them preserve and enhance wildlife habitat and protect natural resources.

"Troon Golf and Country Club has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for their efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Joellen Zeh, staff ecologist for the Cooperative Sanctuary System.

"Over a year ago, Mark Clark, my golf course superintendent, and Eric Watson, our assistant superintendent, and I attended an Audubon International seminar sponsored by the local golf course superintendents' association," said General Manager John Reyhones. "We felt that a program such as the sanctuary program would be beneficial to wildlife, then conservation, our community and members of the club. Both Mark and Eric are to be congratulated for a job well done."

Florida conclave set in August

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — The Florida Turfgrass Association's Conference and Show, "It's Time To Experience the Connection," will be held Aug. 9-12 on the campus of The University of Florida, Gainesville.

This year's conference offers various educational opportunities to professionals in the Florida turf industry. Included are 17 concurrent educational sessions, two GCSAA "Etonic" seminars, 16 innovative workshops, and an update of eight Florida research projects. Tours will be given of the university athletic fields and the research facilities, including Envirotron that was funded in part by the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation and is maintained and operated through funds raised by the FTRF and the Seven Rivers Chapter of the Florida Golf Course Superintendents.

Other special events include the "Largest Warm Season Turf Show" in the Southeast, featuring more than 185 companies in 290 booths. New for the first time is The Social Hours and Awards Dinner combination taking place on Touchdown Terrace in Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. Dr. John Lombardi, president of the University of Florida, will be the keynote speaker for the Awards Dinner. Also being honored that evening will be Joseph Konwinski, the first president of the Florida Turfgrass Association in 1952.