



Laying down the Finn Additive System.

New method makes hydroseeding viable

By LYNN TILTON

CINCINNATI, Ohio — The simple addition of micronutrients to the seed mix has transformed hydroseeding into a method that could help change golf course construction and renovation and overseeding.

Gone is the need for straw mats or blankets. Gone is the

expense of laying turf, the worry about survival, green-up or weeds.

That's because the slurry the hydroseeding machine sprays down is a sticky thick mulch containing ingredients for best germination, including germination enhancers, fuming acid and other soil amendments, readily avail-

able nutrients from soluble fertilizer at recommended rates, liquid lime to adjust soil pH and a beneficial microbial bacteria product.

With just a single pass, a crew of two can establish or re-establish turf successfully — and economically.

"With this system, you can establish new grass for as little as 1.5 to 2.5 cents per square foot," said Al Schrand, consumable products manager for Finn Corp. here. Prior to joining Finn two years ago, Schrand spent four years as a turf consultant.

"The benefits of hydroseeding within the golf course industry are numerous," he said. "While hydroseeding still is a learning curve for many superintendents, it's a great way to seed and overseed areas they thought couldn't be reached."

"How do you seed a major slope?" he asked. "The standard practice is to lay down a straw mat and staple it in place. That is very labor-consuming and costly. With hydroseeding, you merely have to spray a bonded fiber matrix mixture that sticks, prevents erosion and encourages germination."

Called the Finn Additive System, it takes just one hour to learn how to do it, Schrand reported.

"Then comes practice, knowing what to put in the machine and how to get the best results," he added.

Schrand cited a Midwest golf course built over a landfill. "The superintendent was going to use sod, especially around tees, greens and bunkers," he said. "By going with this hydro-seeding system, he saved 75 percent in costs. He needed a quick fix, which was why he was thinking of sod. But a germinating seed is a much healthier plant than sod."

"Also, with seed you don't get that dropoff associated with sod," he added. "Hydroseeding is a linear, complete, uniform germination practice."

"Any time you grow something new, you need microbial bacteria," Schrand said. "Organics. That's what we're doing. We're also supplying erosion-control products which include a tackifier and a wood fiber mulch. What the application crew needs is an application machine with mechanical agitation, which gives equal dispersion during spraydown. A jet-agitated machine is not able to pump this slurry."

That's because the slurry is precisely that. When placed on a piece of cardboard, for example, it will stick in place, with no oozing or sliding.



control, it pays to play it safe.

pre-emergence application. And there has never been any indication of weed resistance to RONSTAR®. Plus, unlike DNA herbicides, RONSTAR® does not inhibit new root growth. So, there's nothing to prevent your turf from growing fuller, lusher and stronger throughout the season. Remember, when it comes to weed control, it pays to play it safe with the time-proven performance of CHIPCO® RONSTAR®.



Big names move to famous clubs

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — The latest in a series of job moves by well-known golf course superintendents is that of Pebble Beach Golf Links first assistant **Eric Greytok** to the head superintendent position.

Greytok succeeds **Mark Michaud**, who took the post at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in

Southampton, N.Y.

Several other well-known superintendents have moved on recently, leaving famed golf courses for other well-known facilities.

Paul Latshaw moved from Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Md., to Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y.,

replacing **Bob Alonzi**. Alonzi had gone to Fairview Country Club, but soon left in favor of Fenway Golf Club in Scarsdale, N.Y.

Meanwhile, Oakmont (Pa.) Country Club's **Mark Kuhns** is in new digs at Baltusrol.

Pebble Beach's Greytok is a former first assistant superintendent at Congressional Golf Club and Merion Golf Club, and once worked at Riviera Golf Club.

New method making hydroseeding more viable

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"It will stick to the ceiling," Schrand said. "Before this breakthrough, hydroseeding was just a mix of seed, mulch, fertilizer and a bunch of water. Crews were spraying rivers. We have turned 180 degrees

from that. What this system sprays out is a thick, moist mulch material, with everything held in suspension. When it hits it sticks, gives good uniformity of germination, no pockets or voids."

How steep a slope can this system handle?

Schrand said: "We've actually done concave slopes. That is why when this stuff germinates it grows instantaneously and very uniform. We are not promoting weeds, which can be a problem with a straw or hay mulch."

How quickly does growth occur?

"We just finished a big film shoot on a yard that was 4 weeks old and it looked like an established lawn," he said. "Grass grows very erect, like bristles on a toothbrush. There is no laydown like you get with sod."

Schrand explained that success comes because at the time of mixing, which takes from 15 to 25 minutes depending on the size of the tank involved, the seed is soaking up the hormones, vitamins and nutrients.

"Then it's sprayed out with a soft, wet, very protective mulch material," he said. "Further, it takes just one or two people to hydroseed and they can cover from 3,500 square feet to an acre per tank load."

The key element to success is water, he said, adding: "If you have irrigation, you're going to have excellent results. The seed, put down at recommended rates, is evenly dispersed. From the machine, an operator can reach at least 250 feet with no problems, and some have done as much as 400 feet, thanks to extra hose."

He reports there's no cleanup because the system uses all biodegradable products. "The wood products and tackifier enhance microbial activity and people can walk on it after the first mowing," he said. "Some courses look like established lawns in just four weeks."

Asked about the economics of this system, Schrand mentioned a superintendent who had a \$16,000 bid for sod, but got those areas hydroseeded instead for \$5,500.

"Further," he said, "the grass was more erect and thicker than in the places where he had used sod. This system gives the seed everything it has to have, except soil temperature and irrigation. But, the fuming acid in the mix can realistically warm the soil by 3 degrees." ▶



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