MAINTENANCE

EDITORIAL FOCUS: Winter Preparation

Seed companies release new varieties for winter overseeding

By JOEL JOYNER

CORVALLIS, Ore. — This fall, new introductions will be breaking into the winter overseeding market offering golf course superintendents a salt tolerant ryegrass, improved seed blends, and higher quality turfgrasses.

The goal for golf course superintendents, particularly those below the transition zone, is to present a playing surface that’s both attractive and enticing to golfers as Bermudagrass goes dormant.

Overseeding market, therefore, is a lucrative one for seed companies, and new products this year aim to bring value to golf courses and golfers alike. Although most seed companies primarily focus on permanent turf, they also have been looking at new ways to ease the golf course superintendent’s seasonal challenge to accommodate golfers.

SEED RESEARCH OF OREGON

SR 4500 is the newest perennial ryegrass to be released this year from SRO. “It’s going to work better for superintendents the further South they are in the United States,” said Skip Lynch, technical agronomist. “If they’re in the northern end of the overseeding market, it may hang in there a little too long. It has a high endophyte and offers a fairly dark green color. It’s a good looking grass with lots of fillers.”

A lot of companies sell individual seed components to allow superintendents to make their own blends. SRO has taken that additional step out of the process by offering their own new blends of Champion Fine and Champion Max.

“Champion Fine is a blend of our ryegrass with the SR 5100 chewings fescue,” Lynch said. “It makes a little better playing surface because the ball sits up a little better. The fescue has a much stiffer leaf blade. It transitions very well, and you won’t lose any color having the chewings in there.”

“The Champion Max blend is basically for greens overseeding,” said Lynch. “It has Poa trivialis in it, and you can take it down to a very fine mowing height. It has excellent color, is very dark green, and has a quick transition in the spring time.”

Turf Seed is showcasing four new varieties this season: BrightStar SLT is a salt-tolerant ryegrass; Citation Fore which is their highest ranking perennial ryegrass in the latest National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) trials; and two Poa trivialis varieties called WinterPlay and WinterChamp.

Dormant seeding in the fall provides greater insurance against winter damage

By KEVIN ROSS

There’s been a lot of talk over the past several months concerning winter damage on golf courses. High-profile events, such as the 2001 US Senior Open at Salem Country Club in Massachusetts, setts, (which sustained severe turf loss prior to the event), has brought this issue front and center (GCN Aug. 2001).

Winter damage, a natate phenomenon. Many states throughout the northern United States and in large parts of Canada sustain turf loss every year. Each year, many superintendents experience the same agony that superintendent Kip Tyler did this year at Salem CC. However, the work done at Salem CC has spurred much thought on how to prepare your golf course for the dreaded winter months.

THE DORMANT SOLUTION

Dormant seeding is one technique that has not received much attention. A successful program of dormant seeding can produce spectacular results in the spring, and it is a great insurance policy in the event that any winter damage occurs.

Dormant seeding is done in the fall, after soil temperatures have declined sufficiently, so complete germination will not occur. However, soil temperatures must be sufficient for the initial stages of germination to occur.

The first step in the seed germination process is water absorption. In the second step, the seed undergoes a swelling, which initiates several biochemical and physiological events. This ultimately results in the development of a seedling turfgrass plant.

In dormant seeding, the seed undergoes dormancy...