Aerator Maintenance

Preventive maintenance is key to effective aeration, especially when it comes to hole quality and finish. Low-quality aeration is one indication of a machine malfunction. Excessive vibration and noise can also indicate a maintenance problem.

"Understanding how the product operates is important," says Peter Whurr, vice president of product management for Textron Turf Care And Specialty Products in Racine, Wis. "If you think that something may be wrong with your machine, generally there is."

Whurr advises superintendents to look at the quality of holes and listen for any undue noise.

"A lot of wear and tear can occur during aeration," he adds. "Adhering to a preventive maintenance program will help improve aerator performance and extend the life of their machines."

With that in mind, here are preventive maintenance tips for improved aeration:

**Engine upkeep**
- Check for oil leaks prior to operating the machine.
- Inspect and clean dirty engine fins with a pressure airline to prevent the engine from overheating. Hose the entire machine down after use to keep it free of dirt and debris.
- Change the engine oil regularly – consult your owner’s manual for the recommended frequency, generally every 50 hours of operation. Always use the appropriate oil grade.

**Tighten the tines**
- Tighten any loose tines before operating the machine to prevent them from slipping out of the holder.
- Inspect the machine for damaged tines. Bent tines won’t produce a clean, crisp hole.
- Coring tines should be cleaned with a water pressure hose on completion of the work cycle.

**Test the tire pressure**
- Make sure the correct tire pressure is set before using the machine. Inadequate tire pressure can cause the machine to operate ineffectively and lead to tire roll off. Consult your owner’s manual for the recommended pressure.
- Check tires for any foreign objects, such as nails and stones. Solid tires also should be inspected for damage to the sidewalls or outside perimeter. Missing pieces of tire material can cause difficult operation.

**Miscellaneous maintenance**
- Tighten any loose nuts and bolts prior to operation.
- On walk-behind aerators, ensure the handle grips are firmly in place.
- Clean and lubricate chains and sprockets according to manufacturer recommendations.