Greg Wiles, superintendent at The Links at Echo Springs in Johnstown, Ohio, had grown frustrated with other granular fertilizers he had used because his mowing baskets were always full of the fertilizer after an application.

"I was tired of putting down fertilizers and then picking them up the next time I mowed," Wiles says. "I was looking for a granular that would get down to my turf where it would actually do some good."

From what Wiles had heard, Novex might solve his problem.

The solution
Lesco allowed researchers at Penn State University to test the fertilizer early last year, and the product received praise for producing an immediate green-up and long-term results. In the study, the product received high marks for its ability to get down below the canopy quickly. The study found that one day after an application, mowers picked up less than .5 percent of the product, compared with over 10 percent for other granulars.

At the same time, the fertilizer provided a quick greening affect because of its active water solubility, the study says. In fact, it outperformed some foliars when it came to green-up.

Brian Rowan, product manager of golf fertilizers for Lesco, says the key is its particle size.

"We tightened our size," he says. "Water breaks down the outer layer and provides immediate green-up. But the sulfur coating helps it last for a longer period."

Wiles says his first application of Novex produced impressive color — a little too impressive in some places, he adds.

"I saw a striping effect — darker green alternating with lighter green — where I'd overlapped too much," Wiles says. "I learned my lesson."

Once he adjusted his application procedure, Wiles says he was pleased with its performance.

Pierpoint said the smaller particles didn't stick to his crew members' shoes, which meant it didn't track all over the course.

Pierpoint says the product also doesn't create a dust cloud around the applicant, which lessens health concerns surrounding its application.

Both Pierpoint and Wiles say they're looking forward to putting the fertilizer down this spring. "As soon as the ground temperatures are warm enough, we're going to put it on the greens," Wiles says.

"We're looking to expand our program to tees, roughs and fairways this year," Pierpoint says. "We're looking forward to similar results there."

Rowan says the plant producing the fertilizer should be at full capacity — 75 tons per day — by the end of February.

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Selecting Amendments

Many products are considered “amendments” to the turf system, including inorganic, organic, microbial, nutritional and hormonal materials. Historically, some have lived up to advertised claims and some haven’t. Despite the fact that many have now been proven effective, the plethora of products on the market still creates confusion.

“The superintendent is drowning in a sea of amendment technologies that all claim to be the magic bullet,” says Bill Torello, a University of Massachusetts professor of turfgrass management. Torello recommends superintendents ask themselves several questions before buying new amendments, such as:

Have there been unbiased field tests on the material and, if so, how much?

“It is only common sense that the buyer make sure the material in question has been field tested by a strictly unbiased source, such as universities or well-known private laboratories/companies,” Torello recommends. “If there’s limited information with only private testimonials from individual users, then it’s a buyer-beware situation. Ask for copies of the research reports, which support the claims of the sellers.”

Torello says many amendments are expensive and should be tried on a trial basis on your own course if questions remain.

“Trial on your own course is the best test, but there must be several replications of the product and control areas where the material is not used for comparison,” he adds.

That’s the strategy that superintendent Kevin Downing has implemented at Willoughby GC in Stuart, Fla.

“The benefits of enhancement are not always readily visible,” he says. “I’m conservative in nature, so I take my selective shots. If something looks viable, I’ll try it for awhile. I’ll split greens or do percentages to see if it does have an effect.”

Do I really need this product to manage my turf?

Of course, different products mean different answers. If the product is humate or humic acids, for example, then research shows that these amendments respond best in soils/growth mediums low in organic matter, Torello says. That would include grow-in, sand-based greens that do not have the organic matter and cation exchange capacity to supply mineral nutrients, particularly micronutrients.

Mike Vella, superintendent at Sugarloaf GC in Carrabassett Valley, and Downing agree about maximizing the value of humic acids and calcium products.

“Spraying calcium and humic acid has become a big thing,” Vella says. “It works, particularly in grow-in situations because you don’t have any nutrients in straight sand until you get some organic matter built up.”

Adds Downing: “We’ve used calcium silicate products during tournaments. It seems to help the turf stand up better and gives you better ball roll.”

If there’s a response, is it because of the added material or to the stated “active ingredient,” which makes each product unique?

“Examples would be the colorants or iron additions to a liquid fungicide application, where the active ingredient is the fungicide, but the additives will green-up the turf as a side effect,” Torello explains.

Many products claim superior growth, color and/or density of turf when they are applied. Superintendents should do their homework to discover the active ingredients and additives.

Peter Blais, the author of this article, is a writer who operates a golf media relations firm in North Yarmouth, Maine. He can be reached at pblais@maine.rr.com.
The Company Line

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Bird repellent

Bird-B-Gone introduces Goose-B-Gone, a repellent that makes grass areas unpalatable to geese and ducks. It's simple and easy to use. Apply it by spraying it directly on grass areas where geese or ducks are causing problems. The product contains a biodegradable, food-grade repellent, methyl anthranilate, which is safe to use, according to the company. For more information, contact 800-392-6915, www.birdb-gone.com

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Aquatrol’s interactive presentation on soil/water characteristics and behavior and the mode of action of surfactants has been approved for 36 external continuing education credits by the GCSAA. These credits are applicable toward certification and renewal as a certified superintendent. For more information, contact 800-257-7797, www.aquatrols.com or CIRCLE NO. 201

Leaders

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

George Hamilton Jr., senior lecturer at Penn State University, received the 2000 Distinguished Service Award from the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council.

The following superintendents recently achieved certification: Glen Moore Jr., Toledo CC in Toledo, Ohio; Norman C. Risk, Christian Reformed Recreation Center in Hastings, Mich.; Andrew J. Scully, Greystone GC in Owings Mills, Md.; Donald H. Johnson, Garra de Leon GC in Santa Cruz, Costa Rica; Donald Periwine Jr., Ames Golf & CC in Ames, Iowa; and Wade D. Vecchio, Cotton Ranch Club in Gypsum, Colo.

KemperSports Management named David Groelle as superintendent of the Royal Melbourne CC in Long Grove, Ill., and Tom Prichard as superintendent at the Glen Club in Glenview, Ill. The company also named Scott Abell as director of business development.

Tim Finchem, commissioner of the PGA Tour, was awarded GCSAA's 2001 Old Tom Morris Award.

The Golf Course Builders Association of America named Jack Nicklaus as the 2000 recipient of its Don A. Rossi Award. It also certified three of its member companies: Pinskibing, Minn.-based Quinnick Brothers Golf, Marengo, Ill.-based Golf Creations, and St. Cloud, Fla.-based Reed H. Berlinsky Inc.

The Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program, a joint public-private effort to foster sound environmental practices, received GCSAAs 2000 President's Award for Environmental Leadership.

David Williams was named vice president of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects.

Pacific Sod named two sales managers: Larry Kaiser oversees the company's northern California territory and Steve Whitehead oversees its southern Nevada and western Arizona markets.

William A. Raney was named president of www.etetime.com.

Arnold Palmer Golf named Timothy J. Tinney as president and chief executive officer and promoted David Polansky to chief financial officer.

Lee Rogers was named territory manager in the Northeast for Tri-Pro turf and ornamental markets. His newly created territory includes Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

Tyler Enterprises named Craig Filley as director of strategic development. The company also named Steve Beckman its southwestern Indiana sales representative.

Tom Works was named vice president of Landscapes Unlimited's irrigation group.

Pennington Seed appointed Stanley J. Kleczynski and Charles W. Lohse as territory managers for the professional turfgrass group.

Send information/color photos to Golfdom’s Frank Andorka at 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, 44130. Fax information to 440/891-2675 or e-mail to fandorka@advanstar.com.

www.golfdom.com Golfdom 63

Turf blankets

Typar Turf Blankets help greens retain warmth and moisture in the winter and create an environment similar to that in a greenhouse. The blankets are porous to allow sunlight, air, water and nutrients through them.

Tests have shown that air and soil under the blankets is 3 degrees to 5 degrees higher than surrounding uncovered areas. This extra warmth is important during the spring because turf under Typar germinates earlier, greens up faster, has longer roots and is stronger, according to the company. For more information, contact 800-455-3392 or CIRCLE NO. 203

Markers

Par Aide's new Proximity Marker and Contest Indicator make it easy to facilitate contests like closest to the pin, longest drive and longest putt. The polycarbonate signs are sturdily built and can withstand rain, wind and hail, according to the company. The signs can also be customized with a course logo. For more information, contact 888-893-2433 or CIRCLE NO. 202
Golfdom

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Golfsat CV3

Joke of the Month

A grandfather and grandson were playing golf together. On a severely dog-legged par 4, the grandfather told the grandson, "When I was your age, I'd aim right over those trees and hit the green every time." The grandson thought about that comment and decided to give it a try. He hit a perfect drive, but it landed right in the middle of the 50-foot trees. The grandson looked sadly at the grandfather, who said, "Of course, when I was your age those trees were 8 feet tall."
Out of Bounds

SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

super bash

THE SUPER BOWL DESERVES A
HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO

SUPER PARTY.
MAKE YOURS A BLAST

BY MARK LUCE

More people will
watch Super Bowl XXXV on
Jan. 28 than bothered
tune into the
presidential debates.

All the hype, bluster, media creden-
tials, corny interviews, endless pre-
game and much-anticipated commer-
cials won't mean much, though, if you
can't enjoy the game with a few of
your favorite friends.

We at Golfdom won't ever be ac-
cused of having the social graces of
Martha Stewart, but we do know how
to party, especially when it's the
biggest game of the year. Instead of
filling your head with early pigskin
prognostications, we thought we
might give you a few tips on making
your Super Bowl party a hit, even if
the game turns out to be a dud.

TV size
In this case, size does matter. If you are
housing a 9-inch black-and-white tele-
vision, we suggest you head to the
local sports bar or another friend's
house, since part of the glory of the
Super Bowl is actually seeing it.

Seating
Before you start inviting folks over,
figure out exactly how many people
you can squeeze into your television
viewing area and how many extra
chairs you have. People don't want to
cran their necks to see the action, and
since the game usually clocks in at
about four hours, comfort is of the
essence.

Beverages
A good host doesn't run out of liquid
refreshments. To be on the safe side,
figure on getting at least six beers per
person, excepting the kids, of course.
It's not a bad idea to have plenty of
soft drinks, a pot of coffee and a few
bags of ice.

Food
Since the game starts at 6 p.m. (Est),
partiers will get hungry quickly. For
hearty football fans, a crock-pot full of
chili or vegetable stew will be wel-
come. If you are lucky enough to live
in a pleasant clime, barbecue must
vault to the top of the food list. You
could also order a few of those 6-foot
party subs from a local deli. If you're
lazy and uncreative, you can always
order out for pizza. But be prepared
for a long wait because there are other
lazy and uncreative people out there.

Snacks
True fans know that nothing goes bet-
ter with football than salty snacks. So
stock up on potato chips, pretzels,
Chex mix or Doritos. Augmenting
these should be an array of dips and
saucers, ranging from the easy-to-make
and sinfully good California Dip to salsa, from spinach dip to Rotel's Tex-
Mex mix. More is good.

Wildcards
Unless you like to do dishes, you should
procure mounds of paper plates, plastic
cups, plastic silverware and napkins. No
need to get fancy football designs on
these accessories; just go plain. No fan
should complain about the service
when it features free chow.

Advice for the host
Don't try so hard to entertain — that's
what the game is for. Relax, enjoy
yourself and watch fellow party-goers
do the same.

Mark Luce lives and writes in Lawrence,
Kan. Unlike years past, he will not host
a Super Bowl extravaganza this year.

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