

PRE-HARVESTING EFFECTS OF AERIFICATION ON KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS SOD

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Introduction

In Michigan we are forced to renovate fields in short growing seasons. Sod is often the choice made because of our time limitations. The usual step to help promote root growth is to aerate the sod soon after it has rooted. What if the aerification happens before the sod is harvested? Will that help the sod to establish faster? Will the sod weigh significantly less? The following study will try to answer those simple questions.

Objectives

- 1) Determine if the pre-aerification of Kentucky bluegrass sod will improve overall quality, by amending soil-layering issues with sand topdressing.
- 2) Determine if the aerification of pre-harvested sod significantly decreases the overall weight of the product.

Materials and Methods

The experiment is a two factor study with two replications in two different areas. Area one is at the Hancock Turf Research Center and area two is at the MSU softball field. Aerification was performed three days prior to sod harvest. Big roll and conventional sod were weighed, pulled, and laid into the appropriate plots. Topdressing was applied the day after the sod was laid to the treatments that received aerification prior to harvest. Post aerification was applied about four weeks after the sod was laid. It received its topdressing soon after aerification was completed. Color, quality, Shear-Vein, and Clegg-shear began once the sod had rooted.

Factor A- Aerification:

- 1) Control- No Aerification
- 2) Pre-harvest Aerification (5-7% effected Area)
- 3) Pre-harvest Aerification (10-14% effected Area)
- 4) Post-harvest Aerification (5-7% effective Area)
- 5) Post-harvest Aerification (10-14% effected Area)

Factor B- Sod:

- 1) Conventional Sod (rolls 1½-ft wide x 4-ft long)
- 2) Big Roll Sod (rolls 3½-ft wide)