

# How Do You Do...?

**With spring ahead of schedule in many parts of the country, what are you doing to "quick start" your fields for use?**

*Answered by Bill Murphy, City of Scottsdale, AZ*

In the southwest our spring weather can often come very early and this year that is holding true to form. In January we were placing some preemergent herbicide (Pendimethalin with 13-3-7 slow release) to give the turf weed prevention, some nutrient kick and stimulating the turf as warm weather arrived. We're completing that control with broadleaf weed spraying for winter annuals. With the recent warm winter we have been experiencing the last few months the grass is starting to show some shoot growth. We'll be supplementing that grass also with some calcium nitrate(15-0-0) and organic compost topdressing in the next few months.

Our main goals at this time of year are to schedule aeration to assist with water infiltration and retention, continue to check irrigation valves on a bi-weekly basis, and complete water audits. This will help check head rotation, distribution patterns, and trouble shoot screens and nozzles that need to be clear of debris. We are placing controls and monitoring ants and gophers that are more active as the soil temperatures increase.

*Answered by Mike Andresen, Iowa State University*

Evergreen covers help extend our season on the football stadium field. Grass under these covers has been growing since early February. On baseball, softball and soccer we apply a fertilizer in the fall just as the top growth stops. In early March we look for a period of 5-7 days of semi-warm nights (30+ degrees) with warm days (50+ degrees). During this window we cut our bluegrass/ryegrass fields to 1.5", sweep with an aggressive turf sweeper to remove winter debris, then roll with a 1400 lbs. roller. This process seems to get more of the warming sunshine to the soil layer allowing it to warm up faster than the surrounding areas. Inducing the plants to put out this new growth so early in the year makes me nervous, but the greenup is significant, and generally well worth the effort! Though our home season is scheduled to start in mid-March, field water cannot be turned on until early-April, due to freeze potential with above ground backflow preventers. If field water were available during this early period, I would use it in various ways to also help the "greening" process. Even with the small things we are able to do the color difference between the fields and the perimeter areas is striking!

*Answered by Marty Kaufman, Tennessee Titans*

**Should** we "quick start" our fields? Temperatures in Nashville have been becoming more consistent. We hit

80 degrees just last week! So, all this warm weather not only has us thinking about start-up, but the turf-grass as well. We removed the grow tarps from the fields on Ash Wednesday and mowed the ryegrass twice at 3/4". This is the first time it has been cut since before the Super Bowl. We also have restarted our irrigation program which consists of deep watering periodically to increase the moisture level in our 90% sand, 10% peat rootzone. We also will be lowering the height of cut and transitioning out the ryegrass with a selective herbicide. After the results of a soil test come in, we will address the fertilization concerns. Heavy nitrogen application will not be necessary until the end of April or the first part of May. All these, and other spring cultivation practices, are dictated by the consistency of spring temperatures. Let's hope things continue to warm up!



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