

We have seen a great deal of problems, especially with regard to the resodding of sports fields. Of particular importance is the depth and type of cultivation used when preparing a seed bed for sod. One of the worst machines you can use is a rototiller. They are subject to pulling up and down, depending on the compaction of the area. We like to use a machine called a Meri-Crusher. It's like an asphalt crusher and can be set to the depth you require. With a rototiller, if you wish to go to a depth of 5" (12.5 cm), due to compaction, you may only go down 2" (5 cm) in some areas. Areas you work more deeply will tend to drop or subside more than others not tilled as deeply.

I would recommend a soil test and doing exactly what that test indicates. If you're working the field area to a 6-8" (15-20 cm) depth, you have the opportunity to apply and work into the root zone 1,000-1,200 lbs/acre (1,120-1,344 kg/ha) of fertilizer or organic matter in the form of compost. This will bring up the organic matter content. Once you have done all that, you can go over the area again with the Meri-Crusher. You need to pull soil from the edges to build up the crown. Go over with the Meri-Crusher or rototiller once again. This will ensure you do not get an excess of loose material in the crown area and 2" (5 cm) or less on the sides. It is hard to achieve a 1% slope, for example, if the centre of the field sinks and the sides stay the same. If you are sodding, at least moisten to allow rooting to begin before play. If possible, 2-3 weeks for sod, 6 months for seed. As soon as the sod is knitted, we like to use a mechanical core aerator or walk behind machine if field is soft. Even walking, a field can be completed in about 3 hours.

This has been a brief overview of some of the issues we encounter in our daily contact with clients or in situations where we have been called in to troubleshoot a problem. ♦

Most Playground Injuries are Preventable, Groups Say

VIRGINIA GALT

More than 10,000 Canadian children go to hospital emergency wards with playground injuries each year—and most of the injuries are preventable, says the Canadian Parks/Recreation Association.

Hard surfaces such as asphalt, bars spaced so closely that children get their heads caught, exposed concrete bases on play-equipment structures, and cracks that catch jacket drawstrings all contribute to the accident toll, association president Neil Semenchuk said yesterday in launching a national safety program.

"On average, there has been one death a year since 1982," he said in an interview after his Ottawa-based association teamed with the Canadian Standards Association to announce the establishment of a Canadian Playground Safety Institute. The institute, drawing on new playground equipment standards developed by the CSA, will train people as "certified playground inspectors."

Course work at comprehensive, two-day workshops conducted by the new institute will include safe design and layout, proper surfacing, and the identification of hazards and risks.

"Asphalt obviously is not really the ideal surface," Mr. Semenchuk said. "It doesn't have a lot of give if you fall from the monkey bars."

Mr. Semenchuk said he hopes the course will appeal to senior administrators in parks and recreation departments, people involved in the education field, and urban planners. The association also hopes to draw private day-care operators.

Parents generally assume that playgrounds have been certified as safe when, in fact, a lot of playground equipment is outdated or poorly maintained, Mr. Semenchuk said.

The first session of the Canadian Playground Safety Institute was held in Penticton, B.C., in late April, with five more to be scheduled across Canada before the end of the year. The CSA requirements for playground equipment will be published in May. ♦



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Seedbank Moves to Saskatoon

CANADIAN PRESS

The first half of Canada's seedbank arrived in Saskatoon Saturday—with a military escort.

"This is Canada's national food security—that's why we would enlist the help of national defence to move it," said Ken Richards of Agriculture Canada. The plant material arrived in a Canadian Forces Hercules aircraft. The seeds will be stored at Agriculture Canada's recently-expanded research centre at the University of Saskatchewan.

The other half of the seedbank will be shipped to the city later this month by truck.

The material was moved in two shipments because officials were fearful of losing the entire collection in an accident.

Richards said that while such an accident wouldn't plunge