

The Hardest Thing To Do, Is

Mike Huck - Agronomist

It was last summer, either late August or early September, I received a phone call from a superintendent who had lost a few greens. Summer patch, Anthracnose, Pythium, you name it and their greens had some of it. He told me the green chairman wanted to deep tine aerify and overseed the greens, if for no other reason than "Just to show the membership that something was being done about the problem." I understood their reasoning but told him that under their circumstances the Verti-Drain would likely disrupt the surface and only make things worse.

"What about a heavy overseeding?" he asked. I knew that their daytime high temperatures were in excess of 100 degrees with nighttime lows and soil temperatures over 90 degrees. I told him they could bury their greens in bentgrass seed but they were not going

to get much germination or growth under those conditions. I added that what germination they might get would be extremely vulnerable to damping off and high temperature injury. In my opinion, they would just be throwing good money after bad.

"Could they sod?" he asked. I couldn't recommend that they spend a few thousand dollars on sod and try to manage a 1/2" root system under the temperatures they were experiencing, it would just be futile. The sod wouldn't tack down until it cooled off and then, what percentage might they lose to the heat? The superintendent agreed with my arguments but reminded me of the words of his green chairman — "We need to do something to show the membership we are addressing the problem." I told him the best thing they could possibly do was nothing at all; **nothing . . . until the growing envi-**

ronment became more favorable.

Referring to *Turfgrass Science and Culture*, we find that creeping bentgrass photosynthesis is optimum when air temperatures range between 70 and 85 degrees. Maximum leaf growth for cool-season grasses occurs between 60 and 80 degrees. Root production steadily slows as soil temperatures begin to exceed 60 degrees and comes to a halt near 90 degrees. Trying to establish bentgrass seed or sod outside of these ranges can be more than an uphill battle.

I personally know how difficult it is to watch turf die and there is nothing anyone wants more than to get those areas back into play as soon as possible. But, please realize that Mother Nature is in control at times and there isn't a slot one can do about high temperatures and humidity when they occur. Remember That trying to establish bentgrass seed or sod when air and soil temperatures

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Life is short.

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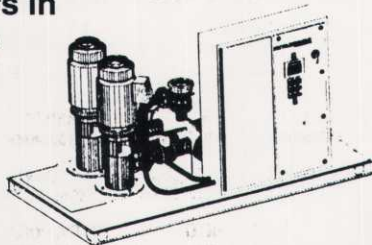
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