

SOFT SPIKES

While lecturing in Europe I received a number of questions about soft spikes and what was happening in the United States. Evidently it has not received much attention in Europe as yet.

If one stops to think, perhaps one reason driving the acceptance of soft spikes at this time relates to the trend to more close mowing heights on greens. Close mowing greatly amplifies the undesirable effects of spike marks on what otherwise is a smooth, uniform, closely mowed surface. In this situation, the effects of spike marks on ball roll are more readily evident to the golfer. Thus, the situation is favorable for golfers to accept soft spikes, particularly if he or she believes it will assist in better scoring.

Now a new question should be raised as to what design of soft spikes is best? Early research by the USGA demonstrated that the raised hub above the shoe sole on metal spikes was one of the major causes of turf damage and thinning. Does the same principle apply to soft spikes? Hopefully the research will be done in the near future to clarify such questions.

NEW PUBLICATION AVAILABLE:

1996 Turfgrass Pathology Research Report - University of Georgia - by Dr. Lee Burpee, Department of Pathology, University of Georgia, Griffin, Georgia, 30223-1797, USA. 48 pages.

This report includes (a) comparative incidence of *Rhizoctonia* brown patch, *Sclerotinia* dollar spot, algae, and hydrophobic dry patch on 26 cultivars and 6 blends of creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), (b) fungicide assessments for the control of brown patch and dollar spot on creeping bentgrass, (c) fungicide and algaecide effects on surface algae control, and (d) fungicides and PGR's for the control of brown patch on tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*).

TURFGRASS VIGOR - PROS AND CONS:

Turfgrass species and/or cultivars with a rapid or vigorous growth rate are needed on turfgrass areas that are subjected to very intense traffic and the associated wearing away of the turfgrass vegetation. The selection of a cultivar with superior vigor may be the best alternative in many high traffic situations. At the same time there may be portions of a turf area, such as a sports field or golf fairway, that receive far less traffic and thus are prone to substantial thatch development. In these cases increased vertical cutting to remove the excess vegetation may be required. Also, differential reductions of nitrogen fertilization on these low traffic areas may be considered.

UPCOMING JB VISITATIONS:

Provided for Institute Affiliates who might wish to request a visitation when I'm nearby:

- July 8 to 10, Woodstock - Vermont.
- July 17 to August 4 - Australia.
- Sept. 5 to 11 - Eastern Oregon - Idaho.

ISTI Chief Scientist: James B Beard
TURFAX™ Production Editor: Harriet J. Beard

The goal of the six issue per year TURFAX™ newsletter is to provide international turf specialists with a network for current information about turf. This newsletter is faxed to all Institute Affiliates that use the ISTI technical assistance services on an annual basis. Faxing is more costly, but ensures quick delivery to those outside the United States.

For non-affiliates, a TURFAX™ subscription is available by annual payment of U.S. \$60.00. Payment may be made by sending a check to the address given below. Foreign orders please send a check or money order on a U.S. bank.

Direct inquiries to:
International Sports Turf Institute, Inc.
1812 Shadowood Drive
College Station, Texas 77840 USA
Telephone: (409) 693-4066
Fax: (409) 693-4878