MONTHLY FIELD TIPS

When discussing your fertilizer program consider the source, nitrogen source that is. Fall is the time to strengthen your turf. Once Phosphorous and Potassium are balanced in the soil and the pH is correct, providing a steady supply of Nitrogen in the fall is one of the most important things you can do for your turf until the ground freezes. 2/3 - 3/4 of the turf’s yearly nitrogen supply should be applied in the fall. The timing of your applications should not be spread out longer than the residual effects of your nitrogen source. Although fast acting nitrogen can be cheaper than slow release nitrogen (SRN), it has to be applied more often and at reduced application rates to be as effective. Fertilizer cost should always be compared against labor cost and results.

Here is an easy way to remember standard fertilizer components and what they do.

Example: 10-6-4, “10” is the percentage of Nitrogen – “6” is the percentage of Phosphorus - “4” is the percentage of Potassium. Remember their function this way. “UP” - “DOWN” - “ALL AROUND”

“UP” (nitrogen) is for top growth, “DOWN” (Phosphorus) is for root development, “ALL AROUND” (Potassium) is for all around heartiness and stress tolerance, such as disease, insect, or drought.

A good starter fertilizer for use when seeding could be something like a 15-25-12 or a 5-10-10, always higher in Phosphorus than nitrogen for root development. A good maintenance type fertilizer could be something like a 20-5-10 or a 26-6-12, higher in Nitrogen for top growth along with some phosphorous, and Potassium for heartiness.

Note: Always rely on a yearly soil test for proper fertilizer formulation. If soil tests show Potassium and Phosphorus are up then why add more nutrients? By doing so you are increasing the cost with no benefit to the plant and you increase the potential of ground/water contamination with surface run off. If Potassium and Phosphorus are adequate use only Nitrogen. Use a controlled release Nitrogen source rather than a soluble.