

"Give It What It Needs"

Address for Success by Jim Hermann CSFM

Late summer is the ideal time to address the needs of your turf. A yearly soil test in August will give you the foundation with which to develop your overall turf management strategy. Be sure to achieve and maintain the proper pH in the soil along with optimum levels of the major nutrients such as phosphorous and potassium. These two nutrients are especially important this time of year for among other reasons, root development and recovery from results of any drought stress imposed during the prolonged hot dry weather most of us have been experiencing.

With the onset of cooler nights and higher levels of soil moisture, a healthy application of nitrogen along with P & K indicated by your soil test will help to jumpstart the turf and promote the growth necessary to help withstand the inevitable pounding caused by fall sports. Be aware of the different nitrogen sources and utilize a source or combination of sources that compliment your fertility strategy. A slow release nitrogen source is especially important this time of year to minimize burn potential and provide a longer lasting benefit.

In addition to soil fertility, aeration is also just as or more important this time of year as it is any other time of year. With the early onset of dry conditions most athletic fields were not aerated at the end of the spring season. Many facilities have had summer activities, which further add to the compaction of the fields. Effective soil aeration at this time of year will benefit literally all the functions of the turf necessary to develop a deep strong root system and dense more durable turf cover. Caution should be exercised when aeration is followed up with fertilization. The potential for burn from both fast acting nitrogen and potassium is further increased at this time. These materials should be watered in immediately after application. If water is not an option, a slow release form of nitrogen would again be recommended. Potassium sulfate as apposed to potassium chloride, would be recommended as a potassium source due to the lower salt index and burn potential of the material.

An application slowly but surely taking a foothold in the sports turf community is topdressing. I am a firm believer in the benefits of topdressing. In my opinion, with the current turf conditions we are experiencing, topdressing can aid in the protection of the new turf currently developing from the seemingly dead brown crowns. Along with providing this protection, an application of a "compatible" material can aid in the moisture holding capacity of the soil. Many fields that don't have the benefit of irrigation are currently dangerously hard. Topdressing of a 1/4" or so in conjunction with aeration can provide a little safety cushion to the players. Improved soil seed contact is another benefit when topdressing is incorporated into your overseeding program.

As I walked many of the fields I maintain over the past few months, in many cases, the only green I came upon was of the broadleaf variety. Weeds have the upper hand when it comes to hot and dry. If you have been diligent with your IPM pest control program, spot weed control is probably all that will be necessary to control current weed populations. If a blanket application is indicated, be careful not to make the application to turf that is still under drought stress. Also, do not apply weed control to an area where you anticipate overseeding in the near future. In this situation it becomes a judgment call as

to whether existing weed populations are such that they will significantly affect the success of overseeding. If weed populations are excessive, weed control should take the front seat with an application as soon as possible, followed by seeding, timed according to the label recommendations of the weed control product. If weed populations are such that you feel they will not significantly affect the new seeding they can be dealt with after the fact when the new turf has been mowed a few times.

"Overseeding" and "turf renovation" are two very broad terms defining procedures whose individual components are left to the discretion of the turf manager. A persistent, well thought out overseeding program is sometimes the determining factor in the improvement or maintenance of existing field quality. Although we many times become disheartened over the course of a typical season, persistence is the key. Periodic overseeding of the wear areas has proven to improve turf density and playability of the turf.

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opportunity to participate in round-table discussions call your Committee Chair from your district, let them know you want to get involved.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey is growing rapidly as we have over 230 members to date. We would like to see more activities in the North and South. This is a great way to meet people in your area who have similar problems and answers about fields and equipment.

District I – Committee Chair, John Salisbury (201) 390-6025, Committee members, Steve Ratto Eleanor Murfitt Hudson, Sussex, Passaic, Morris, Bergen, Essex, Union

District II – Committee Chair, Fred Castenschiold, (908) 722-9830, Committee members, Jim Gavigan, Dean Marzocca, Jim Hermann Hunterdon, Somerset, Warren, Middlesex

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Last but not least is league participation. Include the leagues using your fields in your maintenance plan. As the leagues see improvement in the field quality and feel a part of that improvement they will continue to help in your endeavors. Set up practice goals and designate practice areas off the field to minimize traffic in the game goals. If at all possible redelineate the fields mid season to minimize traffic in the wear areas and allow for more effective overseeding and repair of these areas.

Everything that occurs on your field has either a positive or negative impact on the quality of your field. The positives have to outweigh the negatives. Your only hope of maintaining or improving the quality of your fields is to have a plan in place, which addresses all those forces impacting on quality. Remember, "Address for Success". ▲

SFMANJ Membership Districts

The following Districts were created in order to increase membership as well as serve you better. Our objective is to have meetings during evenings or weekends where sports field managers can gather in or near their areas to discuss similar problems as well as have the opportunity to bring in a speaker. A dinner could be served or you can gather at a picnic grove as a small group.

Here is another opportunity to get involved. We are trying to make it easier by keeping Districts small so you will not have far to travel. We are looking for members who are interested in helping get this off the ground.

If you are interested in gathering with others who are in the same situation as yourselves and would like an

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey

WANTED:
**Recreation Program Coordinator/
 Sr. Activities person.**
 Minimum one year experience in recreation programming. Associated degree or certification in recreation preferred. Interested persons send a resume to:
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