



Frequently spraying greens helps control pests and allows superintendents to fine-tune treatments in response to weather conditions, disease pressure or insect outbreaks.

WHY ARE PUTTING GREENS SO FREQUENTLY SPRAYED?

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Sprayers are used to deliver precise rates of various products to putting green turf. Products typically range from ultra-light rates of fertilizer to highly specialized plant protectants that are needed to control specific turf diseases or injurious insect pests. Other commonly sprayed products include dilute solutions of wetting agents, which are essentially high-tech soaps that help conserve water, and products called plant growth regulators that help suppress excessive turf growth. Appropriate growth regulation helps putting surfaces maintain consistent speeds and smoothness throughout the day, a boon for those who cannot play until after work.

No doubt, putting greens are the most important feature of any golf course, so it is not surprising that they receive the most maintenance inputs. We could play an entire round of golf without hitting one bunker or fairway, yet we can't play a single hole without walking across a putting green – even if you manage to score a hole-in-one.

We expect putting greens to be virtually flawless even though no other turf area on a golf course receives nearly as much stress from foot traffic and maintenance equipment. As a result, putting greens require a great deal of care and timely applications of plant protectants and nutrients to maintain consistent, high-quality conditions.

To the casual observer, spraying greens every one or two weeks may appear to be overkill. However, short spray intervals allow superintendents to observe putting green performance throughout the season and apply products only at the appropriate time to maximize their efficacy. Keep in mind that sprayers do not contain the same products during each application. In some cases, an application may be so simple that it consists of only a single ingredient.

Furthermore, the application rate of many products can be reduced when using short intervals between treatments. Scheduling sprays frequently provides the flexibility to add or subtract plant protectants as needed due to rapid changes in turf health or weather conditions. This improves treatment performance and can reduce the total amount of product required to control a given pest. Considering the high cost of many specialized turf products, the benefits of frequently spraying greens with low product rates ultimately benefits the budget as well as the environment.