



Gearing Up

By Bud White, regional director, Mid-Continent Region

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Spring always brings three different concerns to southern golf courses. First, golfers are impatient for the bermudagrass tees and fairways to regain density. It is key that superintendents educate golfers to understand that until the daytime temperature highs and nighttime lows add up to 150° F, active bermudagrass growth is not possible - only the foliage greens up. Golfers may see runners on the cart paths or in the bunkers, but the increased soil temperatures at these locations greatly affect growth in mid-spring.

Second, spring aeration is continually a delicate subject. Explain to golfers that the superintendent, the golf professional, and the board have balanced this critical aeration with the golf schedule as best as possible. Mentioning a concern about the spring golf schedule seems to make a difference.

Third, the spring preemerge schedule, especially for goosegrass control, is critical. A February application is not going to give late July through August goosegrass control - PERIOD! Goosegrass germinates three weeks after crabgrass, on average, and a delayed, or split application is the only way to achieve August control. No matter how good the material is, it can only last a limited time in the soil.

If goosegrass is your primary target, delay the preemerge application until late March (depending on your north/south location) or split the applications in a March 1 and May 1 program.

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