

From the Northern Ohio Turfgrass News
A POINT TO PONDER — DESICCATION

by Alexander M. Radko
Eastern Director, USGA Green Section

Desiccation is and has been a winter problem for years, but like all problems it doesn't hit home or seem to be important until it happens to you. Last winter was one of the meanest winters for the golf courses in the Northeast in many a year. The winter was open (no snow cover) and windy . . . in fact strong winds blew incessantly day and night and the grasses in exposed areas dried-out. Few escaped injury, and these were principally the newer courses. After the GCSAA Conference we began to get reports of dusty, dry, and crackly turf that was powder-dry in February.

Desiccation can occur on certain areas during years of good snow cover too. Course in the northernmost areas normally enjoy more snow cover than we in the lower New England and Midwestern States; however, even on snow-bound courses strong winds can remove the snow to expose areas which can become desiccated. Superintendents in the northernmost areas soon learned that one way to curb serious injury if desiccation was a threat on a green or tee is to topdress the exposed area heavily in January or February, with double the normal amount of topdressing soil (i.e., two cubic yards per 5,000 instead of one). This affords good protection, and those who have done it swear by it as an excellent treatment to reduce desiccation problems to a minimum.

This past winter others watered as best they could; some rented city water trucks, some watered with their spray tanks — and this helped — if enough water was applied.

Other materials advocated or being tested are polyethylene plastic tarps, polypropylene screens (black and green), snow fences, branches and brush, fertilizers (principally organic), and anti-desiccant materials. In my experience to date, the top-dressing technique has been the most successful of all. Additionally, topsoil acts as a smoothing and truing material to keep greens in top form. Not just any soil is suitable, it must be the kind that is normally used for topdressing your greens. Another side benefit is that snow mold fungicides, applied to topsoil after it is spread, will keep the green protected better than if the fungicide were applied alone.

How do you know whether you will need to protect your greens against desiccation this winter? Only time will tell! It isn't possible to forecast this any more than it is possible to forecast January's exact weather at this time. You must wait and see how the weather breaks. If it is an open and continuously windy winter, as it was from December '67 through February '68, be ready to treat greens that are exposed by mid-January.

If the weather is mild, or if lots of snow falls, there will be less danger that desiccation will occur. But this is what makes the job a challenging one — after one experiences the rigors of summer mortis, it would be helpful to have a relaxing winter. If we could count on it, we'd all be happier when spring rolls around.

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TRAP MAINTENANCE, A COMPLETE ANALYSIS

The following article is taken from a panel presentation given at the MAGCS Fall Clinic by the following men. Dudley Smith, moderator; panel: Harold Frederickson, Philip Bersin, Tom Gilman, and Paul Voykin.

The following are questions and answers taken from that panel.

- Q. How often do you add sand?
A. a. Some courses every year.
b. Some courses every two years.
- Q. When do you apply sand?
A. a. Winter.
b. Summer (not lost by wind blowing).
- Q. What grade of sand?
A. a. Number one torpedo.
b. White Silicon sand (holds more moisture, light blows more).
- Q. How often do you edge traps?
A. a. 12 times a year.
b. 1 time a year.
- Q. Where do you place rake?
A. a. Outside.
b. Inside.
c. Golfer big cupid.
d. Bottom side away from green.
- Q. Do you power rake your traps?
A. a. Some use a 3 gang, 3 point hitch rake.
b. One has three steel garden rakes welded together. Two men pull.
c. Garden tractor with rear mounted rake.
d. Some hand rake after power rake.
e. Some only power rake after rain.
- Q. Should all traps be drained?
A. a. Slit trenches, bottom of trap, fill slit trench with peat gravel, then #2 torpedo over peat, finally good sand.
b. Trench cut into center of trap, peat gravel apply, 4" clay tile on top, with tar paper covering joints.
c. Other methods are employed, talk to panel members.
- Q. How far should the trap be from the green?
A. Big items are traffic control, type of carts used, and design of golf hole.
- Q. Is there a special coating for trap bottoms?
A. a. Plastic can pitch water to a trench drain, keep dirt out of sand, move water evenly through sand, and keep weeds out.
- Q. What does it cost a year to maintain traps?
A. a. (private) Edgewood Valley C. C., 100 traps — \$16,000.
b. (private) Briarwood C. C., 58 traps — \$5,000.
c. (private) Riverside C. C., 58 traps — \$7,400.
d. (public) Indian Lakes C. C., 128 traps — \$7,800.
- Q. How many times a week do you rake traps completely?
A. a. Six times.
b. One time.
c. None.
- Q. Do you keep lips on your traps?
A. Only on green traps.
b. Professional view — lips should not be on fairway traps.
- Q. What type, if any, weed killers are used.
A. a. Para quat.
b. Atlas A.
- Q. How do you keep leaves out of traps?
A. a. ? ?

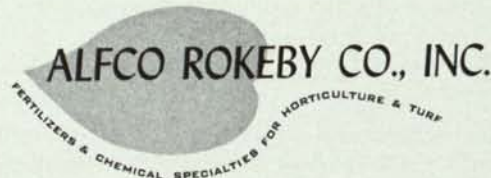
Questions raised from the floor.

1. Can **soil set** be used to keep sand from blowing in the winter?
2. What is the reason for sand traps?
3. Who makes the decision in placing traps?
4. Why doesn't the manufacturer develop a good power rake?

Editor's comment — Joe Dinelli, Superintendent at North Shore Country Club, has developed a good power rake for traps. It is being manufactured by International Harvester.

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Ross W. Smith started with Burdett's, Inc. on January 6th. His duties involve setting up and Merchandising his territory.

Ross and his wife Phyllis have two boys, David and Douglas.

Native of Junction City, Kansas, Ross came to Chicago to the Salvation Army School for officers training and had further education at Jamestown College in North Dakota.

For seven years Ross worked for the Salvation Army commanding corps or community centers in Chicago, Waukegan and Jamestown, North Dakota. This past year he has worked for Simmons Saw Co. in Chicago.

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