

Mapping Turfgrass Problem Areas

by Ray Schmitz, Flossmoor C.C.

Every Summer during periods of stress to the turfgrass due to heat, humidity, heavy play, etc. I think to myself — there must be a better way to approach this season. Suddenly I remembered what had been drilled into my head during my old military days. That is the old 6 P approach; prior planning prevents — poor performance. Using this principal I would like to share the way I prepare for the summer stressful season.

One day while waiting for my lunch at the clubhouse I began to doodle on a placemat in front of me which has a layout of the course. I marked all the areas on the golf course that needed extra watering and handed it to my waterman. The job was done to my greatest expectations. One problem solved.

This was so easy that I started to list some of the other turf related problems I was facing. Disease came to the top of my list and I realized that when I think of dollar spot I know right where to look, so I made a dollar spot map for places to check first. Pythium will show up first on the #7 and #8 tees at Flossmoor. So I charted another map. Brown patch has shown up first in 3 or 4 different places. This is listed separately on another placemat. On the subject of disease I have also made up a map of areas on the golf course that more fungicide or fungicides more often are needed due to the microclimate. I still buy and use the same amount of material but I feel I have more efficient use of what I apply.

Once you start breaking down your turf problems the lists become larger. Some other maps I have drawn up are areas of crabgrass that require pre and post emergent treatment, high traffic areas that need more frequent aerification. Another map is charted for areas of heavy Poa annua that gets overseeded with bent grass and treatment with the new Poa annua controls. Places where heavy leaves can be anticipated are marked for better leaf removal. Sand traps that do not drain properly are also marked to be pumped until the drainage problem is fixed.

A few hints for starting a mapping plan. Look at your golf course during its worse periods in order to draw up a more accurate map for particular problems. Also list individual problems on separate maps or the maps not only become confusing but overwhelming.

Approach your job during the stressful periods with this attitude; you may not be 100% successful but at least you had a plan for success. Usually this will prevent the — poor performance.

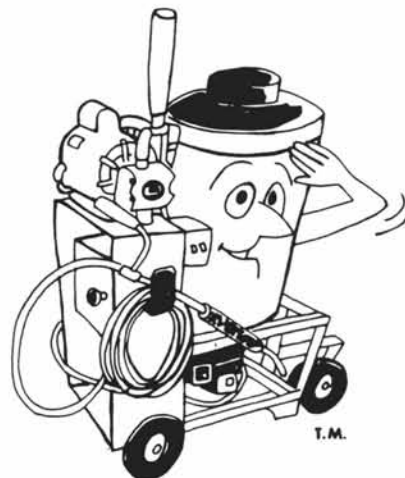
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