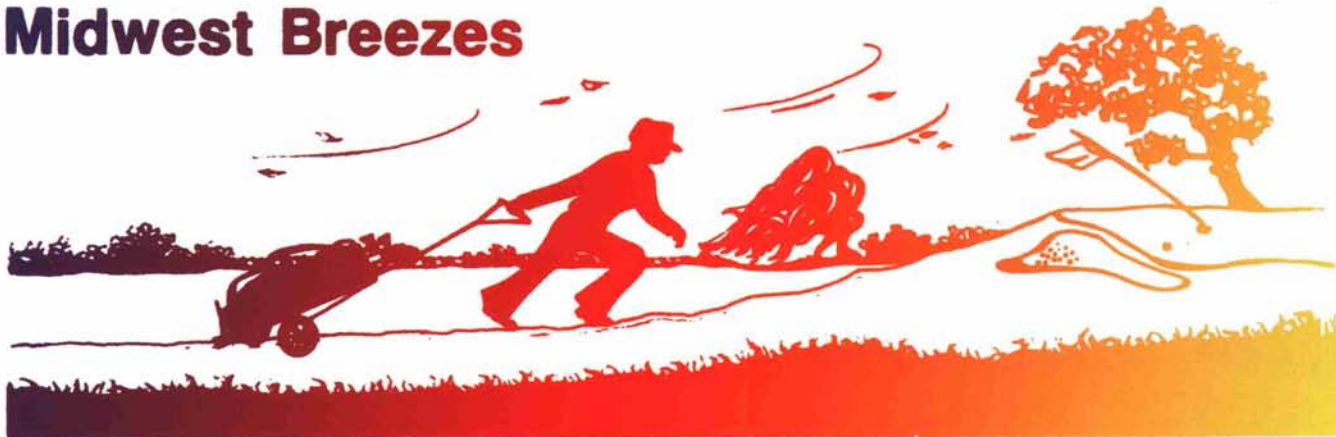


Midwest Breezes



Making Greens Aerification Less Disruptive, More Effective at Rockford Country Club

Like many superintendents, Al Pondel of Rockford Country Club has been looking for a way to make aerification of greens a less disruptive experience for his members. Al now believes he has a plan in place to accomplish this. His plan involves a change in how he aerates and the equipment that he utilizes.

The first part of Al's plan was to change his thinking on how he aerates. Since coming to Rockford Country Club in 2000, he had been aerifying the greens once per year in the fall with half-inch hollow tines. This practice compromised playing conditions for several weeks during a time where we traditionally see some of our best golfing weather. Furthermore, aerifying once per year was not significantly reducing the high organic-matter content of the greens, which Al is working to correct. Aerifying twice per year had been recommended but was tough to institute. Al thought that if he went to three to four aerifications per year, but with quarter-inch hollow side-eject quadritines, he could get the same agronomic benefits in a much less invasive way. Al quadritined the greens in May and early July of this year and will quadritine again in September and October. Results thus far have been positive. All quadritine aerification is completed on Mondays and by that first weekend, the holes are only slightly visible and cause minimal disruption to play. By the second weekend, the holes are completely healed.

The second part of the plan was to update the aerification equipment. Al's most important criterion in

selecting the new aerifier was the quality of the holes being produced, followed by productivity and reliability. After testing several different aerifiers, Al found that all of the units produced quality holes. As for productivity, the Toro ProCore 648 claimed to cover up to 26,000 square feet per hour. Though the ProCore 648 was easy to maneuver and appeared to be well-built, it was new to the market and its track record was yet to be determined. Anxious to learn more, Al spoke with Toro engineers at the 2004 GCSAA show in San Diego specifically about the quadritine option, which was not available at the time he had demo'ed the unit. After Toro engineers assured him of its quality and productivity, Al decided to purchase a ProCore 648. This was a difficult decision for Al because he does not like to purchase newly developed equipment in its first year on the market. Happily, the ProCore 648 has met Al's expectations so far. In fact, he reports that he starts aerifying at 5:30 a.m. and can have all 127,000 square feet of greens completed by 3:00 p.m. User-friendliness is another strong suit of the ProCore 648. Al notes that changing from quadritines to regular tines can be done in about an hour. Also, the tine spacing and depth can be varied. Backing into tight areas is made easier with a convenient reverse handle at the operator's fingertips. Finally, the wheel base of this unit is inside the aerification pattern, which prevents the plugs from being compacted.

—*Brian Mores*
Inverness Golf Club

Controlling Dollar Spot at Stonebridge Country Club

Dollar spot in fairways has become one of the hardest pests to control in golf turf. Many Chicago-area superintendents have been experimenting with the Houston Couch concept of applying a tank mixture of two fungicides. The synergism that can be achieved with tank mixing allows for the reduction of rates for each fungicide respectively.

During the 2004 season, Dan Sterr has had success with the control of dollar spot by applying a mix of Propiconazole and Vinclozolin to fairways on two-week intervals. Dan reports that he has had success

with rates as low as 0.25 oz. of Propiconazole and 0.5 oz. of Vinclozolin.

In the early part of the season, Dan had success with 0.25 oz. of Propiconazole and 1.0 oz. rate of Chlorothalonil, though he is not convinced that this particular mix would hold up during periods of high disease pressure.

—*Brad Anderson*
Midlane Country Club

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