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## AERIFICATION

The principal function of aerification is to help alleviate the problems of soil compaction, layering, surface crusting and thatch accumulation.

One result of aerification is the increased rate at which oxygen will move into the soil and carbon dioxide can move out of the soil. As soils become compacted and the gas exchange rate becomes restricted root growth slows, or under severe compaction roots become shorter and the ability of the plant to take up water and nutrients decreases. This will cause weak, thin and off color turf which is then more susceptible to attack by disease organisms.

Another advantage of aerification is improved water infiltration rate. The aerifier holes make channels for water to move through the soil and through thatch layers. This improved water movement will also carry dissolved fertilizers to the rootzone. It would be advantageous to place slowly soluble fertilizer applications after aerification so to place the food in the rootzone where it can be more easily absorbed by the plants. By placing the fertilizers in these holes fertilizer loss from washing will be reduced.

Thatch decomposition is increased by the mixing action of the soil and the thatch layers caused by bringing up soil during aerification.

Early fall is the best time to aerify in our area because the growing conditions are good and the grass has a better opportunity to become well established before weeds and hot weather become a problem.

**Reprint - Iowa Reporter, September 1972**

## IRRIGATION ON GOLF COURSES

Too much water! Seems impossible in 1976. But that's what I see on a large number of golf fairways and greens. Overwatering is still a serious problem on the majority of courses.

Plants normally grow best if watered thoroughly but less frequently. Automatic systems are usually set to add a small amount of water, but frequently. But the intelligent superintendent can resist the water-by-the-clock syndrome with a little thought and scheduling.

Healthy plants require healthy roots. Healthy roots aren't developed in wet soils. They develop during the drying out cycle. Keeping them wet with too frequent and too much water encourages poorly developed, shallow roots and sickly turf. The result is that the grass is susceptible to plant diseases. And worse, there is a slow conversion to less desirable turf species that occurs over a few year's time. The best way to encourage poa annua on fairways or greens is to overirrigate!

In most cases just reducing the running time on your system will correct a lot of the problems of overwatering. If you now run 18 minutes, try 15 minutes. If that proves to be too much, cut the time again. It will not only be better for the turf, but it will reduce your power bill.

Some overwatering problems are due to poor system design. What looks good on a shop drawing may result in placing nozzles in low spots or so that they overlap at the low ground area. The result is a superabundance of water just where it is least needed. Runoff from rain or snowmelt, shallow water table at that point and then compounded by excessive irrigation, results in a mushy spot where the mower wheels make ruts and the turf is cut to pieces as if in a swamp.

To make matters worse, unless the heads have a checkomatic feature, water flows into the area from higher-lying pipes every time the water is turned off. The head continues to dribble into the surrounding soil.

Solutions that may be considered in or near low-lying areas where overirrigation is most severe include replacing the old head with one that has a checkomatic feature. Another solution is to excavate near the head, put in a by-pass pipe fitted with valves and irrigate with that particular head only when it is needed. Maybe that spot needs water only once every two or three weeks. With normal rainfall, that usually brings runoff to the low area, maybe the sprinkler need run only a couple of times in a whole season! If you have a modern irrigation system with valve-in-head controls and heads with a checkomatic feature, you are fortunate. All you need do is adjust the individual heads to fit the conditions where they exist. It is quite possible that a high spot will need 3 to 4 times as much irrigation as a low spot. This is partly because of lower demand in the lower spot, partly because of the added water it gets from runoff. Furthermore, the soil in a low spot can usually store more water because it has more clay and more organic matter than the high spot.

If you could redesign the irrigation system for your course, most of you could make design improvements. With the system you now have you must work with it, make adjustments or even minor changes. These will pay off in avoiding the aggravation of overly wet spots, to say nothing of improved golfer satisfaction.

Start first by cutting down on sprinkling time. See how little irrigation you can get away with. Adjust down until you begin to border the lean side. That's where your turf will respond with greatest health and vigor. And that's where you'll be favoring the good species over the less desirable ones.

The old question of a little's good, more is better! That's nonsense! A superintendent works against himself if his watering practices conform to that philosophy. Add the water you need and no more. You'll be happy with the results as they show up over the next couple of years.

**Reprint from Minnesota Hole Notes  
George R. Blake  
U. of M. Soil Science Department**



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**BRISTLECONE PINE** in Nevada is considered the oldest living thing on earth at 4900 years of age. It is growing at a height of 10,750 feet above sea level.

**ELISHA JONES SYCAMORE** witnessed the battle of Concord on April 19, 1775.

**LITTLE ROUND TOP PINE** saw the bloody battle at Gettysburg.

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### THIS IS YEAR OF THE APHID

The summer of 1976, as far as insects go, has got to be "the year of the aphid."

They continue to be a problem on shade trees, especially ash, oak, poplar, and maple. Warm, humid weather can help to control the aphids because such conditions favor fungus diseases of aphids, which drastically reduces their numbers. So far (and I'm not complaining) the summer has been hot and dry -- and full of aphids.

If aphids continue to curl foliage and secrete their sticky honeydew, apply a spray containing the insecticide malathion, according to label directions.

Aphids are annoying little insects. They begin by living out the winter as a very tiny, fertilized egg, glued to some perennial plant that is left over in your vegetable garden, or whatever, on your property. In the spring when the weather warms, small aphids, called nymphs, hatch and quickly grow into adult aphids without wings.

These wingless adult aphids are called stem mothers and have the potential of producing millions of offspring. In fact, their reproductive potential is so great that each stem mother has the capability of producing 1,520 aphids to the 21st power, each season ... just add 21 zeros to 1,520!

The stem mothers are all females and produce their offspring without mating. All insects develop from eggs. However, the stem mothers' offspring are born alive, hatching from the egg internally.

As generations of aphids continue during the season, either all or part of a generation develop wings. The winged aphids fly to other plants. These winged aphids are called summer migrants. They settle down on the new host plant and begin a series of successive generations -- all produced as before, from unfertilized eggs that hatch inside the body of the mother.

As summer comes to an end and as the days begin to shorten, the summer host plant either dies or becomes dormant. At this time, a winged generation, including males, is produced. This is the first appearance of males in the aphid colonies, which are brought about by the onset of cooler weather.

The others are winged females, which are called fall migrants. These fall migrants give birth to nymphs in the normal aphid manner, but the nymphs are true females when fully grown. These females cannot give birth unless they mate with the male aphid. After mating is completed, the true females lay one to four, or more large fertilized eggs in a sheltered area of the host plant. Next season, it starts all over again.

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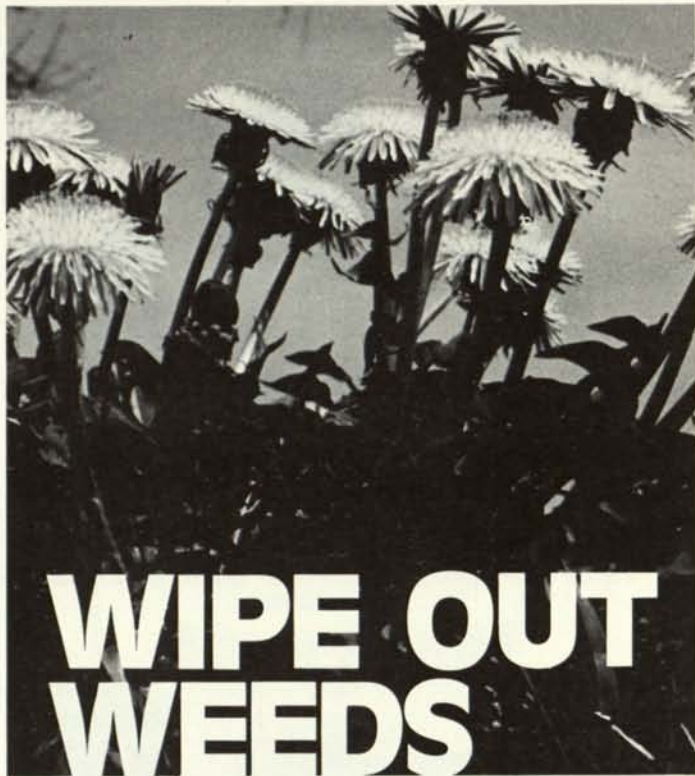
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