

## Putting Green Overseed Report

Fall overseeding of putting green surfaces is done by the majority of golf courses in Florida. The time to order your fall seed is now. A recent study on this subject may shed some new light.

Phil Gardner, regional manager, Lesco Products compiled the following information. The territory interviewed included all the state of Florida except the panhandle region. The total of eighteen hole courses was 465. Of that number, 305 overseeded putting greens. Because of simple geography, the courses from Orlando north led the count. Their section showed 122 out of 130 were overseeded. Tampa, south to Marco Island along the Gulf of Mexico coastline had 90 out of 145 courses overseeded. The east coast, from Vero Beach to Miami was the exception to the state majority. This area had 93 overseeded out of 190 courses computed. The warmer temperatures off the Atlantic Ocean account for this result. In this region the subject is open to conversation. Clubs next door to each other, with similar budgets and the same golf players, seldom agree if it is needed.

The most often used seed type was perennial ryegrass. As a matter of fact it was the overwhelming winner. Only 24 out of the 305 did not use some form of ryegrass. The rye breakdown was as follows: 5 annual, 33 Pennfine, 12 Manhattan, 6 Citation, 2 Regal, 9 Derby, the remaining 214 were blends. The leading blend was Medalist combinations with CBS as runnerup. Penncross bent was used by 13 courses in the Palm Beach and Miami area. Five courses in the Naples section used this type of overseed. Three other southern courses used Penncross bent and fescue blends. Fescue was used in about thirty courses as a blend, but none used it in a pure fine leaf variety. One Palm Beach based company used Kentucky Bluegrass on their two courses.

Overseed rates were fairly standard. Rye rates were between 25 and 30 pounds per thousand square feet. A few courses were as high as 40 pounds per thousand square feet. The penncross bent rates were between 3 and 4 pounds per thousand square feet. Thus the overseed cost of the rye and bent greens were about the same. Rye seed per pound cost about 1/6 that of bent but six times the seed must be applied.

Overseed dates vary in the state. The northern courses start the last week of October. Most are done with their work by mid November. In contrast, the southern 100 mile area on both coasts has little done before Thanksgiving, and generally are finished by mid December.

Eighty percent of the ryegrass seed was treated with Koban. This percentage should be near one hundred percent. Last year the price difference was 4¢ per pound more

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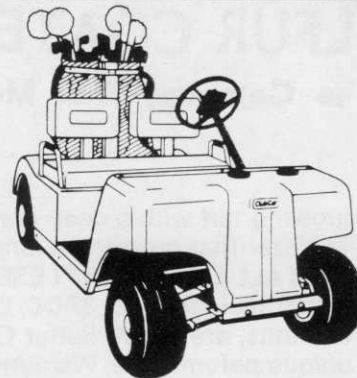
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than non Koban treated seed. This year it will be 5¢ per pound. This is a good investment against pythium disease. The main objection to overseeding with bent is in this area. Bent seed is not Koban treated because of the very small seed size.

Two out of three superintendents statewide said they had their bermuda greens in a weak condition prior to overseeding. This made it easier for the seed to get established. After overseeding the fertilizer rates were increased. Eighty-five percent verticut prior to overseeding. Surprising results show fifteen percent did not topdress behind the overseeding. The cutting height on established overseed was generally 3/16 inch. The east coast led in lower cutting with many at 5/32 inch and some down to 1/8 inch cut height.

Overseeding was not limited just to greens. State totals show 110 courses overseeded tees. This was done to 75 out of 130 courses from Orlando north. Only twelve used a rye blend and the remaining sixty-three used annual rye. Annual rye was also used in fifteen out of the twenty courses on the west coast that overseeded tees. 125 did not overseed tees in that area. Nine of fifteen east coast courses used annual rye on tees. The other six used a rye blend. 175 east coast courses did not overseed tees. Small tees, with heavy play factors, forced overseeding of tees in the southern area.

Six courses in the Jacksonville area overseeded fairways. In all cases annual rye grass was used. But then again it does snow up there!



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