

# Treasure Coast "Tide"ings

By JAMES P. CALLAGHAN  
Riomar Country Club

## FALL FERTILIZATION

### *Getting Back to Basics at John's Island*

During the past two years, Adam Yurigan, Jr., Golf Course Superintendent of the John's Island Club in Vero Beach, has spent a great deal of time in evaluating and readjusting his overall fertilization program. As the 1982-83 season approaches, Adam is confident that his turf will be in peak condition. Having worked closely with Adam and being aware of his new fertilization program, I asked him to share his ideas for this issue of THE FLORIDA GREEN.

Adam stated that the basic fundamental which has shown success for him was simply returning to basics. In other words, he sat down and examined his past experiences with fertilization practices, overall turfgrass quality especially under stress conditions, interactions between fertilization, disease, weeds, insects and thatch, and most important—COMMON SENSE. He said "We started using a large amount of high priced blends that just didn't seem to cut it—the results were not justifying the amount of money being spent. I said to myself that there must be a better way. That's when I sat down and started to do some serious thinking."

Working closely with his two assistants, Chuck Calhoun and Lee VanValkenburg, a total revamping of fertilization practices at John's Island was underway. Frequent soil samples were taken to determine if any deficiencies in phosphorus, potassium or any of the essential minor elements were present. Also, a more intense monitoring of the high soil Ph found at John's Island (and along the entire Barrier Island) was initiated. Yurigan stated "The soil Ph at John's Island will range from an acceptable level (6.2 - 6.8) on the greens to over 8.0 on some of the fairways because of the high content of shell in the soil. Under high soil Ph, iron, manganese, and zinc are tied up in the soil and are not available to the grass-plant. By lowering soil Ph with sulfur, we are correcting many of the minor element deficiency symptoms that we had experienced." Also, to aid in determining possible nutrient deficiencies, Adam has grass clippings analyzed as a failsafe measure in the late summer so that necessary additions can be made in the fall.

Another important facet in Yurigan's fertilization program is economy. "We were spending over \$600.00/ton on some blended fertilizers," he commented. Adam continued, "On some of the so-called economy blends, we were still throwing away money on filler material. So now I

blend my own fertilizers. At John's Island we are now using primarily Ammonium Sulfate and Sulfate of Potash on the fairways. 100 lbs. of Ammonium Sulfate and 50 lbs. of Sulfate of Potash gives me a 14-0-16 blend that supplies 20% of sulfur for less than \$250.00/ton." (When loading the hopper, different raw materials are added in unison as required for the particular blend. Before the fertilizer is distributed, the agitator is run for 1 minute with the discharge closed to mix the materials. Adam commented that his practice mixes the materials as well as founded in blended fertilizers that he has purchased in the past.) Adam added, "If I want slow release nitrogen, I'll add IBDU to the Sulfate of Potash and if I need some Minors in the blend, I go with Milorganite. Basically, we're using pure, refined materials—no fillers. And by blending them ourselves, we're saving money."



Frequent soil sampling and testing have insured a sound fertilization program at John's Island.

To insure optimum benefit from their fertilization program, Adam, Chuck and Lee have been paying more attention to rainfall amounts. They have come to the realization that after several heavy cloudbursts, nitrogen and potassium used to be replenished because of the ease of leaching that occurs on the sandy soil. And the requirements differ on the two courses considerably. Yurigan stated, "Just last week we recorded 2.5 inches of rain on the North Course and only .75 inch on the South. That fact alone will play an important role in determining the date for the next individual fertilizer application for each course." In addition, the greens on the South Course contain a high amount of organic material whereas the North Course greens are relatively sandy. Also the South Course is irrigated with effluent and water from shallow

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PLANTS IN TAMPA AND FT. PIERCE

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wells while the North Course is irrigated primarily with water pumped from a private well on the mainland. North Course fertilization requirements are 20-30% higher than the South Course.

Come September, everything is analyzed again. Yurigan and his two trusty assistants are expecting very positive results from this fall's fertilization program. ■



Proper materials and timing of application will provide dense healthy turf for the peak traffic season ahead.



A picture perfect golf course resulting from an intense fertilization program (#17 - North Course, John's Island).

#### TREASURE COAST ELECTS OFFICERS

At the July 28, 1982 meeting of the Treasure Coast Chapter, the following new officers were elected:

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