

# DIVOTS

By **EDDIE SNIPES**  
San Jose Country Club



## Top Dressing, "She ain't what she used to be."

The Golf Course at San Jose Country Club located in Jacksonville, Florida has a very long and rich history. The present 18 hole course was completed in 1927 by golf course architect Donald B. Ross. The semi-private course was used by guests that stayed at the San Jose Hotel. The hotel was situated one-half mile away from the clubhouse and set on a bluff overlooking the St. Johns River. The hotel now houses Bolles High School. The club was officially chartered in 1947 and went to private membership status.

What in the blue blazes does this have to do with top dressing greens one may ask? The 55 year growth of San Jose Country Club and the practice of top dressing run the same continuum. Top dressing did not begin to blossom as a potential maintenance practice until the 40's.



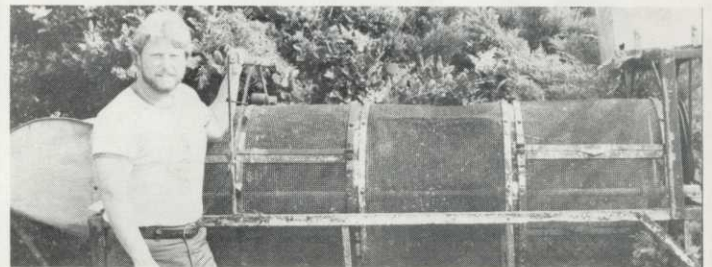
During this time at San Jose, top dressing was carried out with shovels and several men to distribute the top dressing material. This mode of operation was costly and time consuming. Top dressing procedures and San Jose Country Club at this time were in their infancy. One might speculate that in the 40's superintendents did not realize the full benefits of top dressing.

Today Dr. James Beard tells us that top dressing is utilized for (a) thatch control, (b) smoothing or leveling a turfgrass surface, (c) modification of the surface soil, (d) covering stolons or springs of vegetative plantings, (e) winter protection of turfs (Beard 73).



With the advent of a walking mechanized top dresser, the frequency and cost of top dressing became less and its benefits more obvious at San Jose. The greens are historical reminders of different superintendents philosophies on top dressing. Each layer of different soil in green plugs samples is evidence of their tenure at San Jose.

Today it is recommended that top dressing material be of the same consistency as the greens. This will help to prevent layering in the soil which allows for poor water and air distribution in the soil.



Top dressing used to be "homemade" at San Jose in a giant mixer. This mixer is now an artifact of days gone by. Today we buy treated (disease and weed free) material for our top dressing. The cost is far less to San Jose this way, in quality of material and in the man power it would take doing the operation ourselves.



(Continued on Page 44)



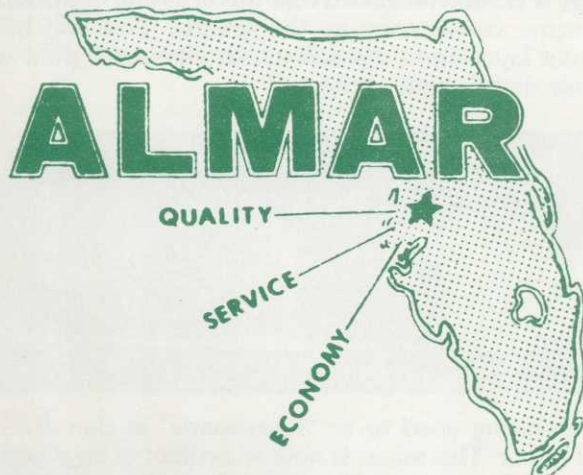
# Liquid Ag Systems, Inc.

Quality Liquid Fertilizers  
Metering Technology and Equipment  
Turfgrass Nutrition Specialists  
Total Concept Service

Pompano Beach, Fla.  
(305) 971-0022

Naples, Fla.

Tampa, Fla.



## CHEMICAL CO., INC.

P.O. BOX 18101

TAMPA, FLA. 33679

CALL COLLECT 813-839-3363

(Continued from Page 38)

able golf course superintendents are forced to work with. "Again, I think that makes our skin a little thicker than a lot of people. Plus the fact that it's going on seven days a week."

With water shortages looming on the horizon and with the immense increase in the price of chemicals needed to enable golf course greenery to survive, superintendents are also faced with a constant source of irritation at the local level—the replacement of divots and the repair of ballmarks on the greens by the players who enjoy the game at the courses.

"These are two headaches," Hampton admits. "To me, the way we handle divots here—this is our personal preference—we do ask the members to replace their divots. The chance of it probably ever growing back may be nil but it's a lot easier to hit off an old divot than out of a new one.

"Ballmarks, everywhere I've been have always been a problem. We do hope our players will repair ballmarks. But we go out and part of our early morning chores is repairing ballmarks. It's done on a daily basis.

"That is probably the biggest pet peeve that we do have. And during the months when the grass is not growing as fast as it is in the summer, they do not heal back as quickly and they're a lot more noticeable."

Golf course operations are supervised, as a rule, by what Hampton refers to as "The Triangle"—the superintendent, the club manager and the club professional.

"As far as the wage scale and the different responsibilities we all have, probably the superintendent is the least visible one among all of them," he says. "But I think now, back in the development-type operation, the developers or the owners themselves are starting to understand the large responsibility of their investment and I think the 'Triangle' is becoming more equal than it ever has been in the past."

Which leads to the inevitable conclusion that Southwest Florida's golf course superintendents have come a long, long way since those days when they bore the nondescript title, "Greenskeepers." ■

Reprinted from *Home & Condo Magazine*, May/June 1982.

### WELL AND PUMP INSTALLATION

Specializing in  
Deep Well Turbine Pumps – Service and Repair  
Maintenance Program Available

## MAXSON

### WELL DRILLING, INC.

3328 N. E. 11th Ave.

Oakland Park, Fla.

Phone 564-3419

(Continued from Page 39)

When it finally comes time to plant the turfgrass and eventually begin a topdressing program, the controversy really begins. Idealistically, I would choose to topdress with the surrounding native topsoil, so that I might match the exact particle sizes. Obvious problems of weed seed contamination, not to mention other problems, immediately eliminate such thoughts. Because of many outside vendors, who commercially offer a more suitable soil, your homework begins. First you must analyze your comparison of particle sizes. Brookside Farms Laboratories Ass'n., Inc. has analyzed our sieve size in a ratio to allow me to understand the ratio of particle sizes, ranging from the smallest to the largest ones. I can then even test various topsoil medias on the market and feel free to choose that which best harmoniously blends to our existing soil. Tests reveal 75% of Boca Greens soil media falls between the sieve sizes of 10 and 60, (medium through large particle sizes) while only 25% of the material falls into sieve sizes of 80 to 100 (small sizes). The coarser particle sizes will aid in hendering compaction, while allowing proper infiltration of available moisture, nutrients, proper pore spaces and ultimately support deeper roots correlating to a healthier stand of turfgrass.

Once you have finally found the media which is best suitable, you then must decide upon the blend. A test of the percentage of sand/silt/clay should be performed on the native soil. A percentage of approximately 5% clay, 0% silt, approximately 90% sand and up to 5% organic matter will produce an ideal media. To achieve these ratios within a blend will cost a few dollars of laboratory testing. The time and money will prove beneficial with years of dividends.

Our ultimate goal in a topdressing program is to not produce an excessive thatch buildup at an alarming rate. Afterall, thatch by definition is an excessive accumulation of growth buildup. Since we are producing a putting surface at mowing heights below 1/4 of an inch year round, we find ourselves beating our putters against a wall. In order to produce the product, thatch will always be a byproduct, so therefore topdress with a soil media that theoretically will meet your best overall demands— but never use just dirt! ■

## PROFESSIONAL PUMP CORPORATION

Leaders in service and sales of pumps,  
motors and electric controls

395-9494

Boca Raton

# OUR GAME IS IMPROVING YOUR TURF



## FERTILIZERS-CHEMICALS-FUMIGANTS

See your Superior Golf Course Specialist

LAMAR "SUNNY" SMITH  
Mobile: 305/832-0451  
Unit 636

ED HAITHCOCK  
Mobile: 305/581-6123  
Unit 2425

DARRYL REJKO  
305/746-0667  
305/747-3541

PLANTS IN TAMPA AND FT. PIERCE

## FREE! Aquatic Survey of your Waterways

A Lake Doctors program can  
control your aquatic weed & algae  
problems.

### Survey Includes:

Full report and cost estimate by  
certified biologist.

We Specialize in keeping  
your Waterways in

*Excellent Condition*

SERVICING GOLF COURSES  
STATEWIDE

*The Lake Doctors, Inc.*

3434 N.E. 2nd Ave.  
Ft. Lauderdale, Fl. 33334  
305/565-7488

718 Savage Ct.  
Longwood, Fl. 32750  
305/339-5222



# LANTANA PEAT & SOIL

1123 State Road 441  
Boynton Beach, Fla.

Call "Ted" Collect

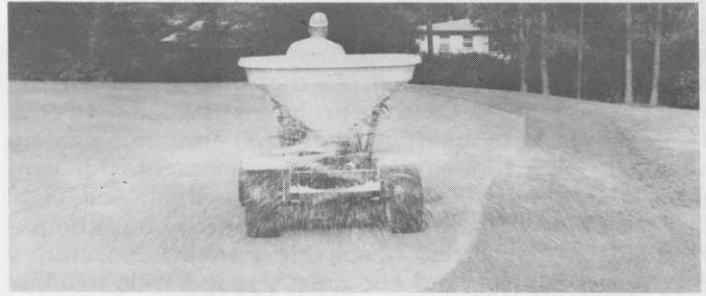
**1-305-732-4116**

## STERILIZED SOILS

TOP DRESSING ■ TOP SOIL

KEEPING GOLF COURSES GREEN

(Continued from Page 41)



Progress in the practice of top dressing at San Jose has now reached the state of the art. A maintenance practice that once took several men two to three days to accomplish can now be achieved in three hours by one man. The motorized riding top dresser with a 1,000 pound spreader attachment has brought greater speed, quality and efficiency to our top dressing program that will now increase in occurrence.



The present literature on top dressing points to many benefits that will help cut maintenance costs. Less disease, faster renewal of growth, less aerifying and better percolation are benefits that will save chemical, man power, and water expenses.

Top dressing practices at San Jose Country Club over the last 55 years have gone through different phases of development along with overall club development. It is progress made in our profession as in the practice of top dressing that helps us to do a better job for the members we work for and to enhance our professional capabilities.



WHEN YOU THINK OF  
MILORGANITE  
IN SOUTH FLORIDA  
WE HOPE YOU WILL CONTINUE TO  
THINK OF US

**PHIL HENDERSON**  
**VANGUARD INVESTMENT COMPANY**  
P.O. BOX 380396 • MIAMI, FL 33138  
(305) 751-3459

Golf Courses Use More

**MILORGANITE**  
Than Any Other Fertilizer



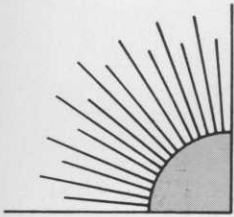
## SPREAD—RITE, INC.

Custom Spreading

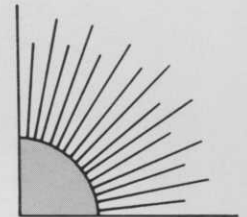
DOLOMITE  
FERTILIZER  
SULPHUR

P.O. BOX 25527  
Tamarac, Fla. 33320

PHONE  
(305) 482-7224



# South Florida Sunshine



By BRAD G. KOCHER  
Inverrary Country Club

## THE ART OF TOPDRESSING

Topdressing serves a great variety of useful purposes. It stimulates growth in turf areas that are weak and need increased turf coverage. It smooths rough and similarly "thin" areas on putting greens and tees. As a soil amendment, a special mix can help to improve poor soil drainage. It can be said - if you are having trouble growing grass in any particular area - topdress it.

There are as many types of mixes available as only your imagination will let you conceive. Sterilized, unsterilized, 50/50, 70/30, 70/30 Medium, coarse, fine, 90/10 - the list goes on forever. One thing that is generally accepted is that the first number in the slash series is the sand and the remainder is Florida muck. However, there are some inconsistencies that exist even using these standards.

One supplier may call his 70/30 mix what another calls straight "muck". Briefly explained, all muck contains a certain percentage of sand. It is usually very fine sand or what we call sugar sand. If muck is placed in a jar of water and allowed to settle, it is readily seen that usually 50-70% of the composition is this fine sand. Conversely, another supplier of topdressing will use muck in its regular form as the other ingredient to be combined with sand. Simply put, if I would order a 70/30 mix, the supplier would take 7 parts sand (fine, medium or coarse) and mix it with 3 parts muck. This second option, as you can see, does not consider the very fine particles of sand that exist in his muck. Most mixes used by South Florida superintendents use this latter method of measuring sand to muck ratios, but it would seem there is a definite need for some form of standardization within the industry.

Differing types of sand also play a big part in topdressing mixes. Trap sand and D.O.T. sand are considered some of the coarse grades of sand and mason sand is probably the finest grade. A combination of the two sands should give you a medium grade mix. This mix, from personal experience, seems to work into the soil extremely well and can be applied at very light rates. Additionally, because the mix works into the existing turf, it is somewhat less abrasive to mowers making for a more contented mechanic.

The infiltration rate of different mixes also greatly varies. A mix using strictly fine sand may have a very poor water infiltration rate, whereas a straight trap sand mix may have excessive infiltration and little nutrient holding capacity. In either case, there are different purposes for different mixes. The coarser mix could be used to improve poorly drained soil especially during aeration, and the medium grade for general topdressing on well constructed greens having a similar soil profile. The fine mix, although one may question its percolation characteristics, can be used to "polish off" putting surfaces or to use

after establishment of overseeding. The finer mix is generally less abrasive and would be less harmful to sensitive overseeding leaf surfaces. It should be noted that any combination of the different sands is feasible and most topdressing suppliers are most receptive to custom mixing to your specific needs.

Probably the greatest benefit derived from topdressing is the results achieved to improve a putting surface. Light frequent topdressings are that extra plus that separates an average putting surface from a superior one. It would not be excessive to consider light (3/4 to 1 cu. yd. per 5,000 sq. ft.) topdressing every 3 to 4 weeks. The topdressing smooths the roll of ball as well as increases putting green speed. One of the prime tools a superintendent has to improve quality, in addition to low mowing height and minimum fertility levels, is topdressing.

Topdressing decreases the severity of low mowing heights. This is especially true when a decision has been made to lower mowing height. Probably the best time to lower mowing height is the day after a light topdressing. It decreases the shock to the plant. I have seen what happens when a green is mowed at 7/32" and the decision to gradually lower to 5/32" is made. It puts undo stress on leaf blades and will often result in browning or yellowing of the turf. However, if over a 2-3 week period the height is lowered in 1/64" increments just following a light topdressing, little discoloration, if any, will result.

One of the ways so many of the courses who consistently maintain Bentgrass or Tifdwarf at 1/8", or 328 at 5/32" is through the use of topdressing. A northern course I am familiar with has the reputation of applying a very light layer of topdressing once a week. We all hear of how so many of the "tournament" courses mow at 5/64" or 3/32" for sustained periods during major tournaments. It is entirely feasible and with light topdressings it can be done with little loss of that desirable green color. I think most superintendents desire a "pool table" putting effect. I am sure at least the smoothness is desired, maybe not always the speed. Topdressing is the answer!

Topdressing is also a small price to pay to improve the most important area on the golf course. Twenty yards of topdressing at \$20-\$25 per yard plus 30-40 hours labor to topdress, drag and mow is a small monthly investment to give golfers a smooth, consistent surface. It does not seem like much when compared to \$300-\$350 thousand to maintain an 18-hole golf course.

I believe most superintendents would, if they had their choice, topdress more frequently. It really seems to solve a great many problems. It is the great cure-all. ■

# Editorial

Over the past ten years Golf Course Superintendents have evolved from grass growers to professional turf managers. They are asked to grow grass under the worst possible conditions, and are required to maintain it at tournament condition on a daily basis. Golf Course Superintendents are managers entrusted with dispensing over a third of a million dollars annually.

Let's look at the facts. A golf course generates a lot of revenue. Often a course is the selling fact for housing units, it provides jobs for restaurant workers, pro shop employees, office workers, club managers and any number of grounds and golf course maintenance employees. The golf course is the necessary factor in this chain. Without "the great green golf course" this whole cycle of enterprise would not exist... this very fact makes the professional Golf Course Superintendent's position one that earns a high degree of financial compensation. Unfortunately some clubs still look at their superintendents as only grass growers and not as total managers.

People management requires superintendents to motivate employees to perform any number of labor positions in a day when generally people are no longer willing to do these type of jobs. They must help to instill a sense of pride in the way their employees view the course. We can not simply hand out tools and demand that workers rake traps, edge cart paths, trim trees, etc... without appreciating them and educating them in such a way that they develop a sense of pride in the "over all success of the total operation."

Golf Course Superintendents are true professionals dedicated to the betterment of golf. Salaries of \$45,000. to \$55,000. are becoming common in Florida. Benefits for good superintendents include \$2,000. a year for IRA, one months vacation, a car for business and personal use, meals at the club, golf privileges for peers and so on.

Golf is a game which should be enjoyed. So... when was the last time you hugged you Golf Course Superintendent?



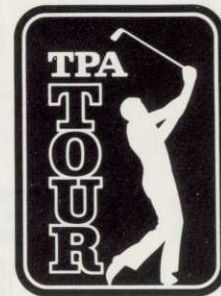
# The Palmer Overseeding Method

Arnold Palmer and Jim Ellison, Bay Hill's Superintendent, are very careful when choosing an overseeding mixture. Some of the world's top golfers have played at Bay Hill in Orlando, and they've come to expect certain standards.

To help maintain the Bay Hill image, Palmer and Ellison use Marvelgreen. And so do some other prestigious courses:

- Fairfield Harbor Country Club, NC
- Hounds Lake Golf Course, SC
- Port Royal Golf Course, SC
- Augusta Country Club, GA
- Jekyll Island Golf Course, GA
- Marshwood at the Landings, GA
- Amelia Island Plantation Golf Course, FL
- Killlearn Estates Golf Course, FL
- St. Andrews of the Gulf, MS
- Eden Isle Country Club, LA

Marvelgreen is also being used at the TPA TOUR Tournament Players Club, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, Allan MacCurrach, Agronomist; Dave Postlethwait, Superintendent.



*Marvelgreen is a product of Lofts Seed Inc. and Great Western Seed Co., Inc., distributed through:*

**Sunbelt Seeds Inc.**  
Tucker GA 30084 ● (404) 491-1311

**Lofts/Maryland**  
Beltsville, MD  
(301) 937-9292

**Valley Seeds, Inc.**  
Phoenix, AZ  
(602) 257-1223

**Great Western Seed Co., Inc.**  
Albany, OR  
(503) 926-5892

**Harpool Seed Company**  
Denton, TX  
(817) 387-0545

**Wilson Feed & Seed Company**  
Richmond, VA 23224  
(804) 232-6791

**Watson Distributing Co.**

Dallas, TX

(214) 630-2222

Houston, TX

(713) 771-5771

San Antonio, TX

(512) 654-7065

**Anderson Chemical & Turf Supply**  
Westminster, CA  
(714) 897-0202





# Introducing the C-I-L line of professional turf fertilizers containing S.C.U.

## Developed for one professional, by another.

(PRILLS SHOWN ACTUAL SIZE)



(PRILLS SHOWN ACTUAL SIZE)



### FOR GREENS:

The new mini prill, specially developed for greens feeding.

### FOR FAIRWAYS:

C-I-L blended products bring you our quality S.C.U. direct.

They're the proven performance fertilizers, designed for your professional needs.



### Professional Turf Products

A Division of C-I-L CHEMICALS, INC.

Technical Sales Representative,  
Stanley J. Kleczynski, WATS (800) 241-0009

#### WOODBURY CHEMICAL COMPANY, FLORIDA DISTRIBUTOR

Princeton (305) 247-0524 FI. WATS (800) 432-3411	Boynton Beach (305) 499-4900	Tampa (813) 247-3621 FI. WATS (800) 282-2719	Mt. Dora (905) 383-2146 FI. WATS (800) 342-9234
---	---------------------------------	---	--



LESCO 

# Certified Quality Overseeding

**LESCO PRODUCTS**  
Division of Lakeshore Equipment & Supply Co.  
300 South Abbe Road • Elyria, Ohio 44035

SHIP TO:

**CERTIFIED SEED**  
Mixture of  
Certified Seed  
K

  
**Oregon**

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY  
CORVALLIS, OREGON 97331

MEMBER OF ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL SEED CERTIFYING AGENCIES



# LESCO

## has CBS unbeatable blend

What happens in Oregon enhances the turfgrass industry  
 LESCO is proud to bring you the results of years of research



LESCO'S CBS Blend is backed by 29 years of seed knowledge and research of Bill Rose (left) and Dr. Bill Meyer (right) of Turf Seed.



Two Turf-Seed contract seed growers roving a Citation perennial ryegrass field for undesirable plants by spot spraying with Roundup.



Seed analyst conducting seed tests by carefully inspecting each seed with the help of magnification. Meeting seed test standards is an important step in the certification process.



Oregon officials placing certification seals and tags on CBS Brand Overseeding Mixture bags, which completes the certification process.



LESCO Certified Quality Overseeding blends give users the benefits of a wide, diverse gene base for more consistent quality turf with a dark color, heat tolerance and excellent mowing qualities vital for overseeding. The certified blends are your assurance of purity and quality. LESCO Product salesmen bring you turf products like their certified quality overseeding blends because they know your concerns are quality and value.

# LESCO

## PRODUCTS

Division of Lakeshore Equipment & Supply Co.  
 300 South Abbe Road, Elyria, Ohio 44036  
 (216) 323-7544

(800) 321-5325  
 Nationwide

(800) 362-7413  
 In Ohio