

Ceding to Overseeding

► *Continued from page 72*

inexpensive and you can make points with the Budget Committee, but the Greens Committee will have your hide when the weeds germinate along with the rye. They will also not appreciate the green speed which is now up to a plus two.

The golf purists who want the best genetically engineered, sleekest, fastest greens will use a mixture of German bentgrasses sold under the tradename, "Mercedes Bents". Other courses seeking quick greens in the winter will use a variety of rough bluegrass called *Poa trivialis*. It is neither "rough" nor

"blue". The FTC should look into this clear case of false advertising.

When to overseed? Re-read Murphy's Laws. Break out the ouija boards and tarot cards. Call Madam Sophie for a crystal ball reading. Dial the Psychic Hotline. Send a prayer request to Oral Roberts. Subscribe to the Farmer's Almanac. Tune in the Weather Channel. Cable Willard Scott. Write Sidney Omarr for your horoscope analysis.

Folks this is the mystical, magical realm of fortune tellers, tournament schedulers, and superstitious superintendents. It is Final Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune all rolled up in one toss of the dice, except Alex Trebek and Pat Sajak don't have to face the music when disaster strikes. Mother

Nature rules!

And so, from the seed growers in the Willamette Valley in Oregon to the seed sowers on golf courses in sunny Florida, I leave you with:

*When all is said and all is done
And the seed is on the ground
The course is set, the die is cast
Into the season we are bound*

*No looking back, no second guess
'Tis time for firm determination
For sunny days and balmy nights
And prolific germination*

*A successful season I wish for you
And in the spring this proposition
That if you did your job and did it well
Nature grant you a smooth transition*



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I think William Shakespeare, CGCS said it best when talking about his own Hamlet Country Club, "To overseed or not to overseed? Aye, that's the question. Whether 'tis

nobler to be greener than thy neighboring golf course in the winter or to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous transition in the spring?"

But before that

question can be answered Will and his boss must answer a few other budget busting queries: Whether to overseed at all? How much of the course to overseed? What type of seed to use? When to overseed?

Whether to overseed at all? This question is often asked by stingy Budget Committees, and Greens Committee members who hate the inconvenience of establishment and transition. After all, there was only one mild frost last year. The greens went off color for only one day, and they never got to wear their "I Love Golf" wool sweaters from St. Andrews.

At this point, you politely remind them that the country club they belong to was once an orange grove which was frozen to the ground one lovely Christmas Day by an unpredictable Siberian Express in an otherwise mild winter! You tell them that you must overseed in self defense and for the prevention of professional suicide.

This tactic works well if they are well mannered, sensitive people. If not, just

post their names on the club's bulletin board as those who refused to let you overseed. In addition, you might also name names in a full page ad in the local newspaper. The third step in this approach is to update your resume.

How much of the course to overseed? If you're selling real estate, have a big ego, have a fat wallet, have lightweight mowing equipment for your fairways, have control over tee times and the weather, have a modern irrigation system with excellent coverage, have good drainage on the course, have an understanding membership, have a membership that goes north for the summer transition, have lots of employees, and are envious of the course that does, why not overseed wall to wall?

If you answered "no" to at least two of the above conditions, you might want to consider limiting your overseeding to just greens and tees. You might tell the "wall to wall" faction that the cost of the seed is only about one third of the total cost to maintain the overseeded turf. When they have to back up their demands with dollars they might think twice... or they might just give you the dollars!

What type of seed to use? Do not use bird seed! It has millet and sunflower seed in it and they really slow down the putting speed. Stimpmeter readings for millet are minus five.

Do not use annual rye seed from Scotty's or Home Depot. True, it is

Ceding to Overseeding!

A light-hearted look at managing your course with a split seasonality.

Green Side Up



Joel D. Jackson
Joel Jackson, CGCS

Continued on page 71 ◀

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