

Blenders cover U.S.

Egypt Farms, Inc.
P.O. Box 223
White Marsh, MD 21162
301-335-3700
John Strickland

ENS Soil & Peat, Inc.
Rt. 1, Box 267
Rocky Mount, N.C. 27803
919-443-5016

Greensmix
E3439 Hwy. 22 & 54
Waupaca, WI 54981
800-537-1796
Christine Faulks

Hutcheson Sand & Gravel
8 West St. South
Huntsville, Ontario
Canada P0A 1K0
705-789-4457
Bob Hutcheson

Rootzone Mix
1726 West Ave. E
Mule Shoe, TX 79347
806-272-5300
Glen Watkins

Southeastern Golf
P.O. Box 7667
Tifton, GA 31793
912-382-7107
Scott Veasey

Tectonic, Inc.
12501 Weld County Rd. 13
Longmont, CO 80504
Tom Briddle

Transamerican Soil Blenders
7005 Salem Park Drive, Ste. 200
Lubbock, TX 79424
806-793-5200
Troy McNeill



Arontend loader adds material to a hopper on a blender.

Photo courtesy of Greensmix

Blenders see technology, innovations improving golf course construction

BY MARK LESLIE

Major improvements loom ahead in golf course green construction as soil blenders mix their imaginations and technology.

Quicker maturity and less disease during the grow-in period of a course are the biggest benefits as blenders look to adding fertilizers, micro-organisms and other materials into the root-zone mix for certain projects.

"The chemical and soil laboratories are the doctors and (blenders) are the pharmacists," said Troy McNeill of Transamerican Soil Blenders of Lubbock, Texas. "They

write the prescription for the blending to fit a given golf course and given conditions. We fill that prescription."

The future of blending is scrutinizing the chemical as well as physical properties of the soil, he said.

McNeill said the industry will see micro-organisms added to the blending process where greens won't be gassed with methyl bromide.

Adding bacteria to the sterile media will help prevent disease and will push the green to maturity much quicker.

"This is extremely important," said Dr. Michael Hurdzan, an golf course architect in Columbus, Ohio, who holds a PhD in agronomy. "The first one to two years, you get some weird diseases. You have a sterile mix (sand) and organisms can just move in there. Putting micro-organisms into the blend can significantly reduce that from happening."

McNeill added: "Maturity increases the productive capability of turf. It helps it to heal from spikes and compression ... and rounds played on the course is the bottom line — getting a return on the investment on the course."

"They can open a course a lot faster this way," agreed Christine Faulks of Greensmix in Waupaca, Wis.

Architect and builder Jim Fazio of Juno Beach, Fla., said this procedure would depend on soils and climate, adding he recommends putting fertilizer on top afterward in the South, "but up North it's a different story."

Faulks said products that are dry and free-flowing, such as water absorbers, can also be added.

"In Gainesville (University of Florida's Ben Hill Griffin Stadium) we blended in lime to help the pH. You will see different amendments that will enhance the root-zone mixture," she said.

Another "additive" of the future will probably be fibers for reinforcement.

Dave Minner of the University of Missouri in Columbia is researching this work, which uses fibers to hold soil together better, much as those used in concrete.

The industry may also see blenders take on more of the workload.

Tectonic, Inc. of Longmont, Colo., can already do the entire greens construction, according to Tom Briddle.

"We grow our own Penncross and the new 1020 from Seed Research of Oregon. We mine our own sand and gravel. We manufacture top dressing and our own bunker sand... the things that other people have to go out and buy on the open market," Briddle said.

Yet McNeill doesn't intend to touch that part of construction. "If we did," he said, "I feel we couldn't zero in on the growing media for the turf."

"Plus, if I jump into that business I'm competing with the people who are giving us the work."

Break The Tablet Habit!



Now you can treat small areas with **Liquid Hydro-Wet Turf Wetting Agent.**

Unlike tablet applicators, the new Pro-Ap delivers **quick and accurate** application.

It's unique. You can adjust rates and apply liquids.

The Pro-Ap is sold with Hydro-Wet RTA, a Ready-To-Apply formulation.

See your Hydro-Wet distributor or call us.



Kalo, Inc. Overland Park, KS 66211
800-255-5196