

Seeking aerification, three clubs pool resources

By PETER BLAIS

FALMOUTH, Maine — In a novel display of Yankee ingenuity and cooperation, three private Maine clubs have agreed to share the cost of a fairway aerifier none could have afforded separately.

Superintendents Kevin Ross of Falmouth Country Club, Chuck Ravis of Augusta Country Club and Kyle Evans of Waterville Country Club agreed to spend roughly \$6,600 apiece on a \$20,000 Ransomes GA-60. A lawyer is drafting a contract covering when each course would use the aerifier and how repairs would be paid.

"Basically, I get it the last two weeks of September," Ross said. "Kyle has it the first two weeks of October and Chuck the last two. And we agreed that no matter where it breaks down, we'd share any repair costs equally."

"Spending \$20,000 for a piece of equipment I needed just two weeks a year didn't make sense. But getting it for less than \$7,000 made a lot of sense."

Ross, Evans and Ravis are all experienced superintendents. They have known each other for many years and are familiar with one another's staffs, especially the mechanics.

"I'm comfortable with their guys and they are with mine. When we presented the idea to our boards, they all jumped on it pretty quickly," Ross said.

Superintendents have a long tradition of lending equipment to fellow superinten-



Three Maine clubs have pooled their resources to purchase the Ransomes GA-60 aerifier.

dents at nearby courses. The spirit of cooperation among course managers, even those at competing facilities, is a source of pride.

But agreeing to share the cost of a new piece of equipment among several courses with different owners is unusual.

"It [jointly purchasing equipment] used to be done a lot in the 1960s, but clubs got away from it," said Terry Buchen, head superintendent at Double Eagle in Galena, Ohio. "It

sounds like it's starting to come back.

"Spelling out the details on a contract is a neat idea. A lot of people might be interested in that."

Sawtelle Bros., a Lawrence, Mass.-based equipment company, agreed to accept half the purchase price last fall and the other half this spring, making it easier on the three clubs involved, Ross said. All three should be able to share in the depreciation benefits as the aerifier ages, he added.

If the agreement works out, and Ross is confident it will, the clubs could share future costs of more-expensive equipment like fairway verticutters or greens aerifiers, he said. Other Maine clubs have approached Ross and the others about their agreement.

"I got a call from Steve Hoisington at Martindale [Auburn] the other day," Ross said. "He's interested in sharing the cost of a [Toro] HydroJect with Portland Country Club and Val Halla [Cumberland] Golf Course."

"The key is to reach an agreement with people you can work with. Chuck, Kyle and I have done that."

Deep drill aerators offer alternative

By PETER BLAIS

FALMOUTH, Maine — The condition of the greens on Falmouth Country Club's front nine has traditionally been a step behind the back nine. The roots, which averaged 10 inches in length five years ago, had shriveled to 4 to 5 inches by last spring.

That's when superintendent Kevin Ross decided to try the Floyd & McKay Deep Drill Aerifier on his front nine putting surfaces.

"By the end of the summer, all the greens were uniform," Ross said. "The roots were back to six to eight inches. I consider that a big improvement."

Verti-Drain and the Aerifier are the two major players in the fast-growing deep aerification market. Both bore past the hard pan that shallow aerators can compact 3 to 4 inches below the surface.

They fracture the soil to a depth of 10 or more inches, allowing air and water in and gas out. The loosened soil promotes better percolation, creates healthier root growth and delays or eliminates the need to rebuild greens.

"Thirty years ago, greens were cut at 1/4-inch, three or four times a week," said Pat Lucas, superintendent at Innis Arden Golf Club in Old Greenwich, Conn., and owner of Earthworks, a customized aerification company serving Northeast golf courses.

"Now they are cut at 1/8-inch every day. That's pushing the envelope and removed any cushion for error we used to have. Deep aerifying gives us back some of that cushion."

The 3,000-pound Floyd & McKay Aerifier uses variable-sized drills —

Continued on page 33

Get Hooked Up To A New Line



The Model H 3-Point Mounted Aerator is the most recent addition to the Turfster International line. Attach it to any tractor with a Category 0 or 1 hydraulic hitch and you'll be on your way to healthier turf without the hassles of a time consuming, complicated hook-up.

Superior aeration at an economical price is just one benefit of the Model H 3-Point Mounted Aerator. Other features include:

- Patented hinged tines for clean removal of plugs
- 2, 3, 4 or 5 drum units
- 36, 60 or 120 tines per drum
- Option of collecting plugs
- Solid steel construction
- Heavy duty solid steel weight box

If you're responsible for strong, healthy turf, it's time to call Turfster. Contact us direct for information on other maintenance products.



Turfster International, Inc.

800 North Old US 23
Brighton, Michigan 48116

1-800-950-TURF

MARKERS, INC.

The Original Golf Course Marking System

Presents Our new removable plastic rope posts



for a safer more attractive alternative to arrange rope on golf courses. Two styles of easy application with varied colors and heights provide more options.

Our green post is unique to the industry and looks fantastic when combined with yellow rope.

Dallas
GCSA

See our Entire Marking System
Booth #3948
or call 1-800-969-5920

SPRAYER TUNE-UP WEEK, FEB. 21-25

Keeping in mind that a pre-season tune-up can avoid downtime and frustration caused by breakdowns, Feb. 21-25 has been declared Sprayer Tune-Up Week, said Dr. Stephen Pearson, technical services manager for Spraying Systems Co.

Fifty agricultural and turf organizations are endorsing Sprayer Tune-Up Week, suggesting that mechanics normally check hardware and plumbing for signs of wear and tear; calibrate and replace worn nozzles; and review safety supplies and procedures. Calibrating and tuning up equipment can yield big financial dividends, saving as much as \$5 per acre on each chemical applied, according to the organizations.

Deep drill aeration

Continued from page 30

1/2-, 5/8- and 3/4-inch — for different soils and times of the year.

Drill depths are adjustable from zero to 10 inches and capable of doing a 6,000-square-foot green in 30 minutes (5 inches deep) to an hour (10 inches deep).

The big advantage over the Verti-Drain is the quicker green healing time, according to Ross and Lucas.

The Verti-Drain's lifting and shattering action disturbs the putting surface, often requiring 10 to 14 days to heal.

Floyd & McKay's Deep Drill Aerofier spins the compacted soil out of its holes (located 5 inches apart) causing less disruption to the green.

"In one or two days, you don't even notice the drill holes," Ross said. "The members love it."

Added Lucas: "It does the same thing as the Verti-Drain, but without the after-effects."

The problem, at least for Northern courses that might use the machine twice a year, is the cost — about \$30,000. For them, leasing the Aerofier might make more sense. Southern courses that aerify six to eight times yearly are more likely to consider purchasing a unit, Ross and Lucas agreed.

Ross subcontracted his greens out to a turf management company. The charge was 3.5 cents per square foot. The total cost for Falmouth CC's nine greens was \$2,200.

Lucas has a thriving business, leasing his equipment to golf courses and athletic fields throughout the spring.

"We're pretty quiet in July. Then things get busy again from mid-summer through early fall," he said.

TESTED. PROVEN. EFFECTIVE. SAFE. NATURAL. NON-TOXIC. PREDICTABLE. RELIABLE.

Now Available in a Finer Grind!

For Peat's Sake... Use SAND-AID!



When you build. When you rebuild. When you aerify.

SAND-AID™ improves the performance of any sand-based putting and playing surface.

Boosts the Organic Matter Content of sand/peat rootzone and topdressing mixes more than 60% without negative effects on infiltration or percolation rates.*

Increases Carbon Release Rates in USGA type sand/peat mixes by as much as 60% — making more raw material available to build better turfgrass plant tissue.* SAND-AID's C:N ration is 20:1 — ideal because it won't compete with turfgrass for soil nutrients.

Significantly Increases Stress Tolerance to high temperature and drought-induced senescence and wilt. Increases moisture

holding capacity up to 12% in USGA-type mixes and up to 30% in all-sand mixes.*

Improves Fertilizer Efficiency. Its extremely high CEC increases nutrient holding capacity and reduces leaching losses of potassium and micronutrients (usually very mobile in sand-based systems).

Improves Quality and Vigor. In tests at Michigan State University, SAND-AID "improved turf quality as well as stress tolerance." Its "effectiveness increased over time and the more intense the stress, the more obvious" the benefits.

Jump-Starts Microbial Activity by serving as an immediately available food source for soil microbes. SAND-AID's rapid organic fraction helps reduce vulnerability to diseases associated with high sand content/low organic matter like Root Pythium, Curvularae, Take-All Patch and Summer Patch.

Won't Layer or create localized dry spots.

The most agronomically effective, economical and cost efficient organic amendment available.

To optimize the performance of the sand-based systems you design, build or maintain, specify SAND-AID.

Call us Toll-free!



Emerald Isle, Ltd.
1-800-628-GROW

*Tests conducted on USGA-type rootzone mixes in 1991 and 1992 by Turf Diagnostics and Design, an independent testing laboratory. ©1993, Emerald Isle, Ltd.

TESTED. PROVEN. EFFECTIVE. SAFE. NATURAL. NON-TOXIC. PREDICTABLE. RELIABLE.

See us at the GCSAA Show. Booth #1317-19

CIRCLE #135/BOOTH #1317,1319

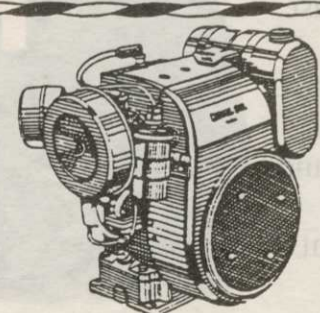
KOHLER engines

THE MOST POPULAR REPLACEMENT ENGINES SHIPPED AIR FREIGHT DIRECT TO YOU!!

LOWEST PRICE IS GUARANTEED!

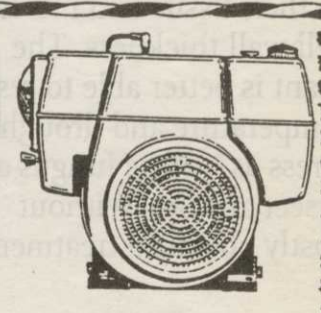
TOLL FREE 800-345-1960

PRECISION SMALL ENGINE CO., INC.
2510 NW 16TH LANE • POMPANO BEACH • FLORIDA 33064



K321S-60407
RETAIL YOUR COST
\$1222.11 \$980.00
FITS TORO GM 3/300

CALL FOR QUOTE ON YOUR ENGINE!



M16S-711533
RETAIL YOUR COST
\$1216.52 \$975.00
FITS TORO GM 3000

PRICES INCLUDE AIRFREIGHT

CIRCLE #136/BOOTH #1332