

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

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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.

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

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