

# Case makes his case for inventive algae cure

By MARK LESLIE

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Algae. It's been a dreaded foe for the golf course superintendent... until now.

Superintendent Jeff Case of Quail Ridge Golf Course here has devised a cure for algae that USGA Green Section Mid-Continent Region Director Jim Moore termed "simple but ingenious."

And relatively cheap. Under \$500, Case guesses.

Spotting wet ground and associated algae, Case will spike or aerify the area, then bring in his secret weapon: a fan built into a frame that can be inverted and aimed directly at the ground, drying out the algae in little time.

Case suggested this process:

- Obtain a 36-inch-square, direct-drive shop fan (\$300 to \$400).
- Build a frame (about \$100 in materials) for it so that, when inverted, the fan is 36 to 40 inches off the ground.
- Place it on wide pneumatic tires to prevent rutting.
- Add a hitch so it can be hauled behind a vehicle. It should be light enough to easily maneuver by hand.

The fan, Case said, is "a really good tool to physically dry out the algae and give the turf more opportunity to fill in. Another advantage is that it's portable. If you have more than one area that is infected with algae, you just move from green to green.

"In some instances we put a generator in the back of the cart.

Other greens have electricity."

The height of 36 to 40 inches, he said, is because when the air hits the ground from that height it deflects and covers a larger area — 200 to 300 square feet.

Case warned that a person must watch carefully, "because it can dry an area so fast you can lose turf. You want to dry out the ground but not the leaf of the plant. This is why it's important to have a crew member close by at all times. He would be there also, to accommodate play."

Having a crew member present is also important, he said, because "you don't want to cause ruts" in that often-wet ground, or interfere with play.

After the algae is dried up, Case sometimes spot-fertilizes or overseeds the area.

The time required to dry off an algae-laden area varies as greatly as the wetness of the algae and the soil, he said. "On one green it may take three hours and another, 30 minutes. But it's worth the wait."



ON THE GREEN



Jeff Case checks the effect of his improvised "algae fan."

New

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## Lewis, super

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and coordinated the national conference in 1989.

What does the future hold for superintendents? More training in personnel management and environmental issues, Lewis said.

"Most of us are strong agronomically," he said. "Our weaknesses are almost always in the field of people-management skills. When there is a breakdown, when a superintendent gets himself in trouble, it's usually because of a lack of communication and poorly managing people. None of us learn that in school. I've attended many interpersonal relationship seminars, but I still think that is the focus, especially for young people coming up."

The environment, he added, "is a growing problem everywhere in North America — and it should be. Superintendents are stewards of large tracts of land and it's incumbent on us to exercise the very best in management practices, with the idea of being soft on the environment.

"Sometimes it's tough because you deal with peoples' perceptions rather than facts. But that keeps us sharp and on our toes."

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