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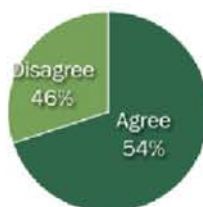
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Add Pigments vs. Pre-colored

Slightly more than half (54 percent) of superintendents say, for tank mix solutions, they prefer to select and add pigment colorants with other products over pre-colored, pre-mixed products.

AVERAGE ANNUAL AMOUNT BUDGETED FOR COLORANTS \$2,900

spending 20 percent or more than they were three years ago.

We sat down with Joe Lara, the senior product manager for BASF's turf and ornamentals group, to discuss some of the findings.

GCI: THE RESEARCH INDICATES AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SUPERS WHO ARE USING COLORANTS AS A TOOL IN TURF MANAGEMENT SINCE WE FIRST CONDUCTED THE SURVEY THREE YEARS AGO. WHAT DO YOU THINK ACCOUNTS FOR THIS INCREASE IN POPULARITY?

JOE LARA: Even before the recent elevated interest in pigment colorants, many superintendents were looking at colorants as a way to add a green hue in to some of their fungicide tank mixes that would leave a residual color on their golf greens. Some premix fungicide products on the market contain a green colorant and I think superintendents were looking for a way to simulate that residual colorant effect.

That said, and to address your question,

I would account the recent increased interest to a couple of factors.

From our view, I think a key influence that pushed the early-adopters in the superintendent ranks was related to constricted or reduced maintenance budgets during this last economic recession. I don't think anyone would disagree that during this time superintendents were expected to accomplish the same or possibly more with lower budgets. The superintendents who had some working knowledge and experience with colorants were the first to consider these products as one way to way to manage through maintenance cut-backs and provide an acceptable cosmetic appearance to their properties. Responding to an even more challenging decision, there were turf professionals who made changes to their fall overseeding practices for economic reasons. As a result, I believe this gave them the opportunity to experiment with colorants to see what could be possible and acceptable to their club members and golf clientele for winter play.

Plant health

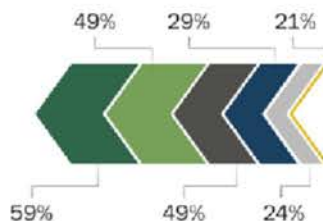
More than half (56 percent) of superintendents indicated they use colorants for their plant health benefits, primarily to protect turf from sun damage and stress. Coming in a close second, superintendents say they also utilize the benefits colorants provide in improving turf growth in the spring.

I use pigment colorants in my turf management practices primarily for plant health benefits.

DISAGREE 44% **AGREE 56%**

What plant health benefits do you derive from the use of pigment colorants in your turf management practices?

- Protection from sunlight damage/stress
- Improved turf growth in spring
- I don't use pigment colorants for plant health benefits
- Protection from cold damage/stress
- Improved turf growth in fall
- Other




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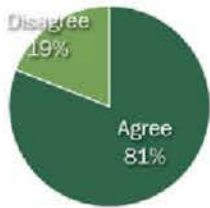
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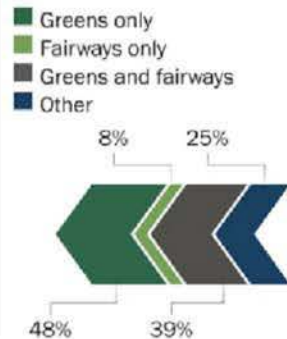
scan the QR code with your smartphone
or visit [YouTube.com/Aquatrols](https://www.youtube.com/Aquatrols)

Dye vs. Pigment

You understand the difference between dye colorants and pigment colorants and how they're used in turf management.

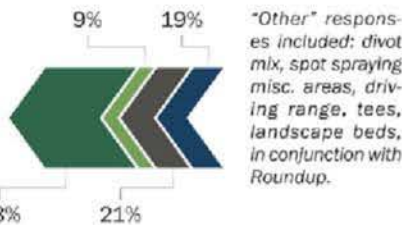


Where do you use pigments?



Where do you use dyes?

- Greens only
- Fairways only
- Greens and fairways
- Other



"Other" responses included: divot mix, spot spraying misc. areas, driving range, tees, landscape beds, in conjunction with Roundup.

SOURCE: GCI research

Underlying some of these changes to traditional fall overseeding practices was the expectation of a potential agronomic benefit in an improved spring emergence of their warm-season turf without the presence of a competing cool season perennial rye stand. I think the tough economic conditions provided the momentum for proponents of this concept to actively put out trials on the golf course for closer evaluation. Many I know have found success in taking this approach and have embraced the addition of a pigment colorant to this program, creating a very acceptable green appearance on dormant winter turf

The second factor contributing to what we see is the attention now from regional university and independent turf researchers. In the past few years we've seen field trial work performed by institutions like North Carolina State, Purdue University, Clemson University, University of Florida, The Ohio State University and the University of Arizona in collaboration with USGA turf agronomists. Their efforts have helped golf course superintendents and other turfgrass professionals gain a better understanding of the performance characteristics of turf colorants. What we see today is increased confidence by superintendents to






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Syngenta Business Institute™

ALUMNI UPDATE

The leadership discussions have already proven to be valuable. I started the year developing goals and objectives for the upcoming season and I incorporated several leadership goals and objectives that we discussed during the institute.

One technique that I put into action was to engage the entire team. I spend more time getting to know them and drawing out their ideas on all things golf-operations related. We have already implemented some of their suggested changes and as the season progresses I am sure there will be more.

The quality of the program and the presenters was outstanding. This is not just another seminar. The overall organization and logistics of the event were outstanding.



John M. Gosselin,
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use colorants in a variety of ways as these independent field research trials provide more information about the choices they have and what can be expected from these products.

WE KNEW ENHANCING TURF'S AESTHETIC LOOK WOULD BE A TOP USE, HOWEVER, TIED FOR SECOND WAS USING COLORANTS FOR HEALTH BENEFITS. IS THIS A NEW TREND AND WHY?

There is more discussion today among suppliers and turf professionals around the topic of plant health. Quite frankly, there are many ways to influence the growth and health of plants – starting with the basic foundations of what is required for plant growth, i.e. soil, water, air, nutrients, sunlight. Many different cultural practices and commercial products can be introduced into a growing environment to influence the performance and ultimately the health of plants.

What you are referring to today are the claims made by a few manufacturers that pigment colorants influence the way a plant functions. I think there is a trend to use pigment colorants predomi-

nantly to create a visual effect. Is there something more than cosmetic? I think there is still a lot of discussion and debate around factors like preferred color hue, canopy and soil temperature, and light levels that may directly or indirectly create a plant response. From my experience, the environmental growing conditions, time of season, and cultural practices are the larger external drivers that set the stage for how a plant grows and performs. Any physiological responses initiated from topical additions of a pigment colorant may be temporal, transitional, or incremental at best. It's not a substitute for practicing the essentials and fundamentals of turfgrass management, much of which includes cultural practices to move air and water into the profile, a proper regiment of nutrients, and management of disease and insect pests. Healthy resilient plants begin with strong active root systems that are necessary to help the turf plant growth through various stress events. It may be found that colorants, under certain conditions initiate *(COLORANTS continues on page 62)*

RE LISTEN HERE LISTEN HERE LISTEN HERE LIS



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For more

Check out the Superintendent Radio Network for additional information about colorant use. BASF's Joe Lara breaks down the research and what it means for your turf management program.



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STAY SHARP

IT'S SO EASY TO ERR WHEN GRINDING AND SHARPENING MOWER REELS AND BLADES. HERE SIX COMMON MISTAKES AND SOME WELL-HONED TIPS TO AVOID THEM.

By William Olmstead

Properly maintaining mowing equipment is essential to successfully maintaining turf. While the principles behind responsible equipment management are dogmatic, the methods of blade and reel sharpening are more widely debated. GCI reached out to equipment industry leaders to find out what works, what doesn't, and how superintendents get the most out of their reels and blades year.

When turf managers and technicians run into with quality-of-cut issues they often overlook the most basic question: Is the mower operating with a sharp reel and bedknife? "Going out to mow with dull reels and bedknives is like running a stock car race with improperly inflated tires," says Lynn Westbrook, principal engineer at Jacobsen. "You'll never get the performance you need and the results will be less than perfect. It's amazing how many guys either forget or neglect reel and bedknife sharpness."

Here are six common mistakes superintendents and technicians make when grinding.

NO RELIEF

Unfortunately, technicians often leave relief grinding out of their normal routines. "The key to relief grinding is to stay on top of it and not wait until quality-of-cut issues present themselves in the grass," says Klasie Baard, Jacobsen sales training manager. "Technicians should supplement their spin grinding with relief grinding at appropriate intervals. When you lose the relief grind on the blade edge, it creates additional contact and friction between the bedknife and reel blades, which demands additional horsepower. In fact, studies have shown that five reels running without relief use significantly more horsepower than five reels with relief." Maintaining a relief on the blade edge does more than save on wear-and-tear and horsepower. "A good relief angle will also throw grass into the baskets more effectively," says Baard. "A flat grind will actually fan the grass rather than cut it effectively."

NOT USING OEM PARTS

"If there are any two parts you should buy directly from the manufacturer it's the reel and bedknife," says Westbrook. "They are designed to work together and have very precise



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metallurgy to ensure the highest performance. When you add in a 'may-fit' reel or bedknife into the mix, the performance of the machine will be sacrificed and the results will show up in the grass. Another benefit is having the backing and support of a manufacturer if you run into any issues."

NOT CHECKING THE CONDITION OF ROTATING COMPONENTS

While technician's typically focus on grinding the reel and bedknife, it's important to not to overlook the rollers, roller bearings, and reel bearings to ensure a stable grind. Any wear in the rotating components can cause the reel or bedknife to

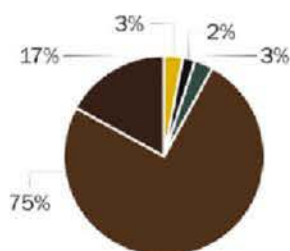
By The Numbers

Last year GCI, in partnership with Foley United, conducted research to gauge reel and blade maintenance trends and practices among superintendents and equipment technicians.

How do you determine when to grind?

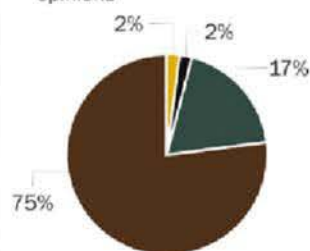
- Based on hours
- Based on weeks
- Based on weeks
- Whenever it needs it
- Other

Editor's Note: "Other" responses included end of season, annual, and winter, as well as when labor was available.



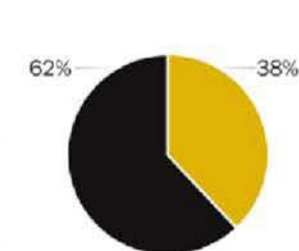
How committed are you to your current grinding practice, regimen or philosophy?

- I don't know
- Definitely need to change my practices
- Would not change
- Open to hearing other opinions



Do you spin grind only?

- Yes
- No



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