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Grau's Answers to Turf Questions



A Time to Rest

This dept. has been the recipient of almost every question that can be asked about turf and turf management. It gives great pleasure to be able to answer questions that are certain to help our correspondents to avoid unnecessary trouble. One such question is, "Should I aeration (or verti-cut) in hot weather?"

The answer is found in one of the Q & A's in this issue. The man is buying a new machine. Understandably, he wants that machine to work for him and to give him maximum benefit. The philosophy that we attempt to impart is that there is "A Time to Rest."

This man's greens are bentgrass. He has overseeded with Penncross. It is natural and normal for bents (and other cool-season grasses) to take a rest during summer's heat. Just as we are admonished to "let sleeping dogs lie," so should we do as little as possible to disturb the "rest" of the bents. The possibility of damaging the grass is very great. The chance of helping it in some way is small.

Time to Disturb Grass

The best time to disturb grass is during the period of active growth. With cool-

season grasses this is in the cool seasons of the year, spring and fall. One can do enough aero-thatching or aerifying or vertical mowing then to carry the grass over the hot weather rest period when the only activities should be mowing and watering. Feeding can be done in connection with cultivating.

Greens of bermudagrass (or zoysia) should be cultivated during hot weather because this is the season of most active growth. With these warm-season grasses, the rest period is during fall, winter and early spring dormancy.

There have been unfortunate developments on courses where spring cultivation has been delayed until the cool season normally had ended. Operations were carried out under ideal cool conditions. One week later the temperature shot up to 95 deg. The results were sad.

Use of the Aerifier

Q.: We are considering purchasing an aerifier or the new Aero-Thatch machine. If we buy the Aero-Thatch do we need an aerifier also? I understand the Aero-Thatch takes care of everything in one operation.

We sowed our greens over the sod with Penn-cross on first of April and would like to follow up on this care. Should we sow more Penn-cross in Sept.? Can you use the Aero-Thatch machine during the hot weather? We have been using a Verti-cut mower. I will appreciate your recommendation on these machines. (Indiana)

A.: Your purchase of the Aero-Thatch will make it unnecessary to have another aerating tool. The unique construction of this machine enables you to cultivate and aerate the soil, relieve compaction and remove unwanted thatch in a single pass.

It would be unwise to say now whether or not you should sow more Penn-cross seed this fall. Wait and see what kind of a catch you get. If you have your new machine by then it would be a fine thing to sow another half pound after aero-thatching. The grooves provide nearly ideal seedbeds for overseeding. This, also, is the ideal time to use insoluble nitrogen fertilizers.

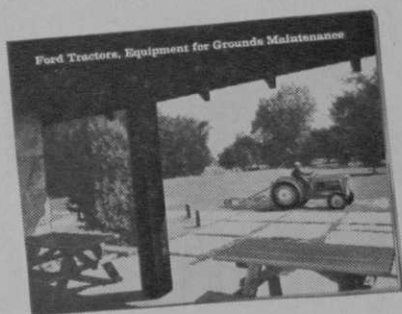
I would use a thatching machine or aerator only when grass is growing strongly. Hot weather is a good time to let the grass do some coasting. Vertical mowers are wonderful tools but hot weather is the time to rest these machines.

Recovery from Desiccation

Q.: I have several areas of winter desiccation on my greens this spring. What do you suggest to restore the turf? Some of it shows growth. Usually I apply a topdressing as early as possible with arsenate of lead added. Will this further aggravate the desiccated areas?

Can bentgrass seed be sown ahead of the topdressing and lead mixture? Will fertilizer

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