

Fred Grau's Turf Questions & Answers

Soil Nutrients

Q: Our bluegrass fairways are badly infested with clover. We have never used any fertilizer, except some barnyard manure, due to limited operating funds. Next spring we hope to have enough money in our budget to provide commercial fertilizer. Would you recommend that we use activated sewage sludge, or something with a much higher nitrogen content, and at what rate should it be used?

All our fairways are watered. (Colorado)

A: Undoubtedly the barnyard manure which you used carried white clover seeds. The continuing clover indicates lack of nitrogen, which you have recognized. Before you decide on any commercial fertilizer you should have soil tests run for pH, Ca, P and K. Your agricultural experiment station at Fort Collins can give you advice on how to draw the soil sample and how to submit it.

A copy of the results will help us to advise your best procedure. Certainly there would be little sense in using a material that carries a significant content of a nutrient that already is in good supply in your soil. By the same token, the fertilizer which you select should provide those nutrients that are lacking in your soil.

Green Replacement

Q: We have a green that lies next to a good sized elm that hasn't yet been killed by Dutch elm disease. Roots have penetrated most of the green area of about 3,500 square feet. We have trenched several times and chopped off most of the roots but there are still some in the green which has not held up too well this summer.

I would like to re-seed the green just after Labor Day and either discard the old sod and re-work the seedbed, and plant stolons or seed with Penncross bent. To my knowledge, I have never seen any of it. I think the bent we have now is Colonial that was given to us in 1931. I have never liked it because it doesn't seem to stand up as well as some other bents.

I have a good spiker and an aerifier and am wondering whether you would suggest spiking several times and seeding with Penncross, or tearing up the old sod, re-working the seedbed and then seeding with Penncross. I use quite a lot of natural organic and boost with Urea-form for additional nitrogen.

Our play averages about 250 people per day, which doesn't help matters too much. The soil texture is a little on the heavy side, although I have aerified several times and filled in with a sandy compost. We did not have too much winterkill here last season. (Illinois)



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