

One Product, Twofold Advantage

Wetting agent, fertilizer combination helps solve localized dry spot woes

BY LARRY AYLWARD
EDITOR

Rick Wohlner, president of Precision Laboratories, consulted people like Jim Champion III, superintendent of the NCR CC in Kettering, Ohio, to create Cascade Plus Fertilizer, a new product that combines the wetting agent technology of the established Cascade Plus brand with fertilizer in a coated blend.

"We came up with the idea for the wetting agent-coated fertilizer by interviewing superintendents to discover their needs," Wohlner says, adding that the product is available in organic fertilizer,



The test area before Jim Champion applied Cascade Plus Fertilizer.



The test area soon after Champion applied the product.

synthetic fertilizer and a mixture of both. "They told us, 'A product would be very desirable if it allowed us to use a fertilizer and wetting agent in the same application.'"

Champion, who has used Cascade Plus on his course, tested Cascade Plus Fertilizer last summer on fairways. He says the product, which was rolled out in the spring, performed well.

NCR CC has experienced problems with hydrophobicity (water repellency) over the years. The course features a gravelly, clay-based soil with excellent percolation. "So during times without significant

rainfall, we'll see localized dry spots no matter how much we water or irrigate," Champion says.

The two components that comprise Cascade Plus Fertilizer performed well together to combat the problem, says Champion, who saw results within two weeks.

"As the wetting agent set in and allowed the hydrophobic areas to recover, the spoonfeeding from the organic fertilizer helped the grass recover faster," Champion says. "The formulation we tested is a good source of fertilization that added micronutrients to the soil and provided a

bit of a kick to help the struggling grass to recover."

The treated and non-treated areas differed greatly. The soil was evenly moist and deeply rooted on the treated areas, but powdery and less thickly rooted on the untreated areas.

Mark Heater, superintendent of The Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter, Fla., experienced similar results at his course. He applied the product in May on 7,000 square feet of a "perennial, problematic sandy range tee that's extremely hydrophobic" during the nonrainy season. The tee's color was a mixture of tan and green, Heater says.

"I used the organic blend of the product, applied it at the recommended rate, hand-watered it one time and then irrigated it normally," he says. "A week later, the tee was perfect green."

Usually, it takes much rain to green up the tee, Heater notes. He attributes the tee's quick revival to the soil retaining more water (because of the wetting agent) combined with the product providing a bump of fertility.

Champion also likes the product because it allows him to make timely applications to control localized dry spots in certain areas. He can apply Cascade Plus Fertilizer in July to combat localized dry spots without having to worry about increased disease pres-

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Problem

Got isolated dry spots? If your course experiences water-repellency problems in the summer combined with little rainfall, there's a good chance it has the problem.

Solution

A new product, which combines a wetting agent technology with fertilizer in a coated blend, can help superintendents battle localized dry spots.

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sure, burn from the organic product or flush growth.

"We didn't observe any increased disease and we did this on July 11," Campton says. "There was no brown patch or pythium, two diseases you expect when you make an application of fertilizer in July in central Ohio."

Wohlner says superintendents will like the product because the wetting agent's longevity matches or exceeds that of the fertilizer, and the two elements work together for up to 12 weeks.

Wohlner says Precision Laboratories plans to introduce other nutrient-based wetting agent carriers in the future.

Editor's note: Here are other products that can help superintendents combat the stress of summer by managing their turf with less water:

L-amino acids

MACRO-SORB and QUELANT L-amino acid biofertilizers from **Nutramax Laboratories** are based on years of research to develop ecologically sound turfgrass solutions. The exogenous application of L-amino acids greatly reduces the energy requirements of plants. The net result is a healthy, strong and efficient plant that's more able to withstand the rigorous stress caused by drought, high temperatures, traffic, diseases, poor soil and other adverse conditions. L-amino acids enhance the uptake of nutrients and other materials.

For more information, contact 800-925-5187 or www.macro-sorb.com.

Water-absorbing polymer

Advanced Water Management offers Hydrozone, a water-absorbing polymer that absorbs 30 to 40 times its weight

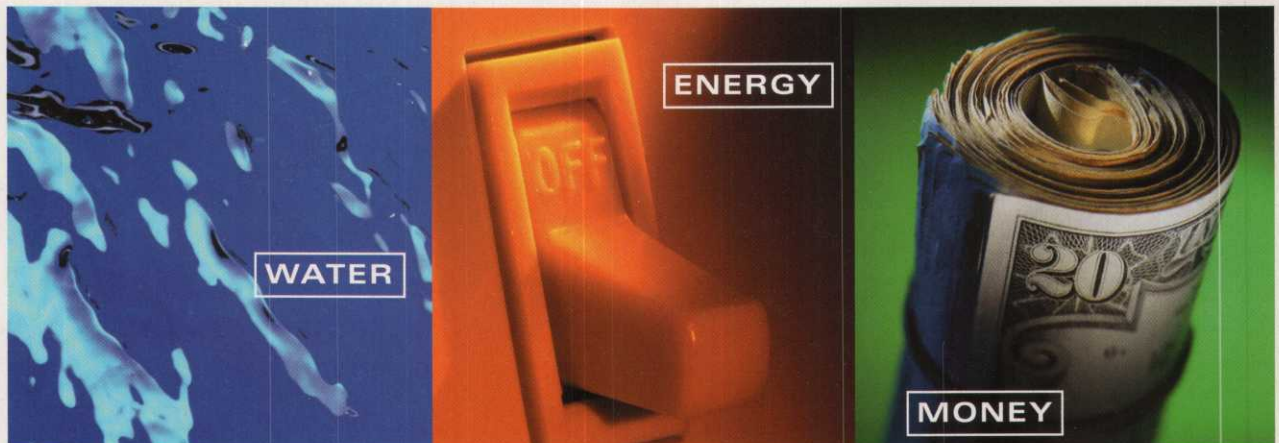
in water and later releases the water to a plant's root zone. Hydrozone, a white, free-flowing powder with little or no odor, lessens water loss caused by evaporation and percolation, the company says. When integrated into the growing medium properly, it reduces run-off by at least 50 percent. A recent study also reveals that Hydrozone reduces wilt on high-stress days.

For more information, contact 877-994-3494 or www.hydrozone.net.

Wetting-agent pellets

Montco Products offers Surf-Side Pellets to control localized dry spot. The pellets are 99 percent active nonionic wetting agent. One superintendent reports that Surf-Side Pellets help eliminate hard-to-wet areas on his golf course and improved water movement

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through the soil. The pellets decreased the need for daily irrigation and nearly eliminated the need for daily syringing. For more information, contact 800-401-0411.

Cure localized dry spot

United Horticultural Supply offers Alleviate,

which cures localized dry spot. The hydrophobe tenside chemistry in Alleviate targets the coating of waxes, lipids, fulvic acids and other materials that make soil unable to re-wet. Alleviate is a blend of organic solvents designed to attack and break down the hydrophobic materials that bind to the

sand particles in the soil profile. This action removes the waxy materials and places them in solution, which means they can be flushed from the soil profile. As Alleviate keeps the materials in true solution, they cannot reattach themselves to the sand particles.

UHS also offers Respond 2, a concentrated wetting and penetrating agent. Its penetrating action moves water deeper into the soil profile to increase root depth, the company says.

For more information, contact 800-847-6417 or www.uhsonline.com.

Soil surfactant, etc.

Aquatrols recently introduced these products:

- Primer Select is a soil surfactant that allows superintendents to select the application rate and frequency to match soil type and spray program preferences.

- PrimerSelect SWDG is a spreadable, water-dispersible granular (SWDG) carrier that is easy to spread and dissolves instantly when watered in, leaving no carrier residue.

- Aqueduct SWDG provides rapid recovery of localized dry spots and wet spots. It's easy to spread and dissolves instantly when watered in, leaving no carrier residue.

- Dispatch is the first in a line of water and energy-saving tools offering faster penetration and wetting times than that of competing products.

For more information, contact 800-257-7797 or www.aquatrols.com.

Foliars

Milliken Turf Product's foliar products are developed to enter the plant and not the root zone. So when the root zone is compromised by drought, water restrictions and root dieback, the plant still has nutrient access. In addition, the company's biostimulants are positioned for their hormonal benefits, reducing the carbohydrate consumption for root/shoot growth in stressful periods.

For more information, contact 800-845-8502 or www.millikenturf.com. ■

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