

# Real-Life Solutions

MULTITASKING FAIRWAY TOPDRESSERS

## Doing Double (and Sometimes Triple) Duty

Many superintendents blanch at the expense of buying a fairway topdresser. But innovative superintendents are finding new ways to use these machines that defray the costs

BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR., MANAGING EDITOR

**J**im McNair, certified superintendent of Orchard Beach CC in Aurora, Ill., never expected to get so much use out of his fairway topdresser. The piece of equipment cost him a pretty penny, but he felt it was worth it to keep the fairways from becoming rock hard and prevent a thatch layer from building up.

What he discovered, however, is that he could use the topdresser in ways he'd never dreamed possible. He used it to fill in bunkers during a recent renovation. He uses it as a mobile feeder station to fill his smaller machines for

topdressing greens. With its balloon tires, he's even able to use it as a general purpose dump truck to move materials around the course without destroying turf the way his more conventional dump truck does.

"I didn't see all these advantages when I first considered buying it," McNair says. "But now that we have one, it's changed the way we care for our course. I'm also sure we'll find new uses for it that I haven't even thought of yet."

McNair's experience mirrors that of other superintendents who purchased a fairway topdresser for one purpose, only to discover its myriad uses afterward. In an era where budgets are tight and superintendents are being asked to do more with less, a multitasking topdresser could be one of the most useful tools a superintendent can own.

### The issue

It's not an easy decision for superintendents to present plans to a green committee or an owner to purchase a fairway topdresser, says Scott Kinkead, vice presi-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TURFCO

dent of Turfco Manufacturing, a Minneapolis-based manufacturer of turf equipment, including fairway topdressers.

"For the frequency of fairway topdressing, it's typically a larger investment than most clubs are willing to make," Kinkead says. "So superintendents are looking for a machine that will do more than just topdress fairways."

Kinkead says most superintendents are able to use his company's machines as all-around material handlers, which increases their usefulness to a golf course. The CR-10 has high-flotation tires and a cross conveyor attachment that makes it useful in multiple applications, like bunker renovations, trench-filling during irrigation projects and tee construction.

"These are jobs that are usually labor-intensive and

**You can use your fairway topdresser to move materials around your course without doing damage to the turf underneath.**

include multiple workers with shovels trying to move material around," Kinkead says. "If you can save time and labor from using one machine, the monetary savings will hit your bottom line."

### Bunker building

As Quarry Hills GC is being built in Quincy, Mass., (the first nine holes are projected to open this summer), superintendent Dan Bastille has the opportunity to fill his maintenance facility with the equipment of his choice. To build the soil profile he wanted (the course is being built on an old landfill), Bastille knew he wanted to

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### Issue

How can superintendents justify purchasing a fairway topdresser that may only be used a few times a year?

### Solution

Find other uses for the machine, from using it as a mobile fill unit for greens topdressers to filling bunkers during reconstruction.

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topdress the fairways once a month. He shopped all of the alternative fairway topdressers on the market and finally settled on the Turfco CR-10.

What Bastille discovered, much to his delight, was that in addition to filling his topdressing needs the machine



**Of course, you can always use your fairway topdresser in the traditional way, but where's the fun in that? Finding other uses helps defray the equipment's cost.**

also functioned well as a bunker building tool.

"It was a real money-saver for us," Bastille says. "You can get right up to the edge of the bunker to fill it."

Bastille also said its cross-conveyor system provided much more accuracy in the sand placement.

"There was a lot less wasted sand with this machine," Bastille says. "You don't have it spilling out the sides of the bunker the way you might if you did the job by hand."

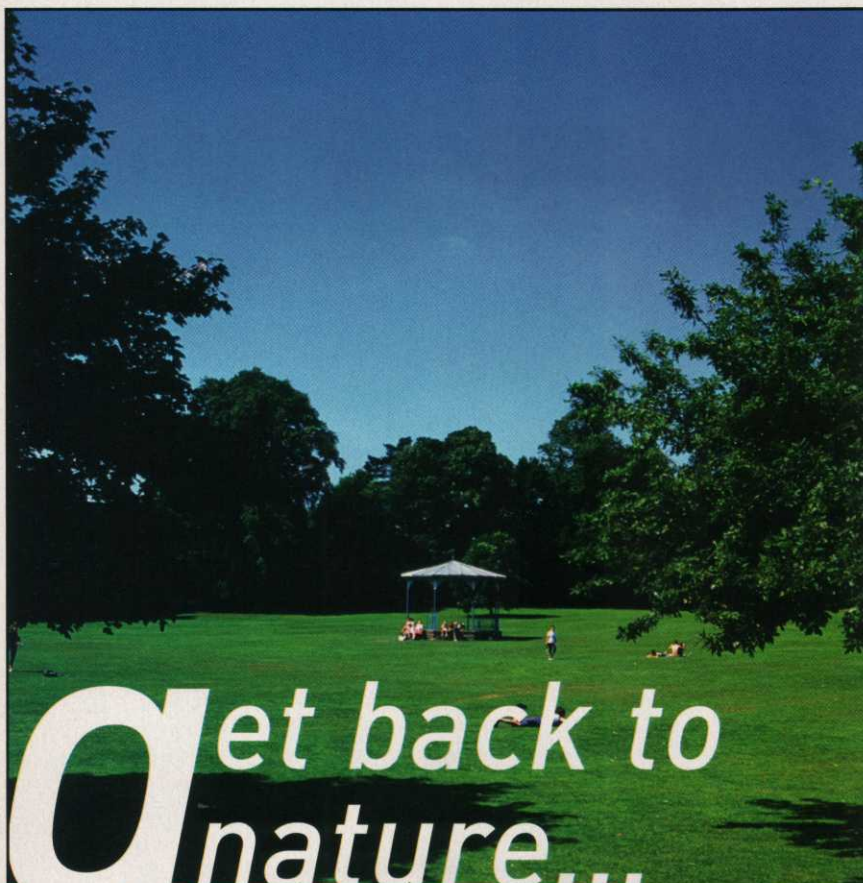
Robert Steinman, certified superintendent of Beekman CC in Hopewell N.Y., says he discovered he could more easily replace the 10 percent of the bunker sand he loses on an annual basis to wind and play by using his fairway topdresser. "It made the job go more smoothly and it saves labor costs year after year," he says.

### Trench filling

Steinman also says he found his machine to be helpful in filling trenches created during a recent irrigation project.

"We have 40 acres of fairways, so it was big step for us to buy a machine strictly dedicated to the purpose of topdressing it," Steinman says. "But we were able to use it to fill up the trenches we dug when we replaced some irrigation lines recently. It was a huge timesaver."

Normally, the job would be done by five crew members with shovels, and it would take several hours to get



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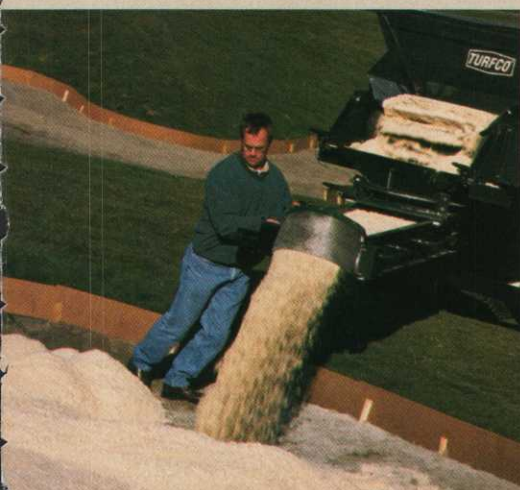
it done, Steinman says. By making use of his fairway topdresser, the job can be done by two people.

### All-purpose material handler

McNair says he uses his CR-10 to move dirt around the course when he needs to reconstruct waste bunker edges that erode.

"It always occurs at the edge of the bunker nearest the green," McNair says. "That's the spot where golfers exit. When the edges erode, we need to go in there and rebuild them. I use our fairway topdresser to haul topsoil to the edge of the bunker to help me do the job."

He says he has also used his fairway topdresser to fill in washouts after bad storms. "We haven't had to do a lot of



**Filling bunkers used to require multiple workers to do the job, but using a fairway topdresser can reduce the crew to two.**

that, but when we do we use our CR-10 to handle the material."

The fairway topdresser also functions as a mobile "nurse truck" for his greens topdressing program, which prevents his crew members from wasting time running back and forth to piles of sand dumped around the course, McNair says.

Steinman says that although his course owns a large dump truck, he'd rather use his topdresser to move materials around because it

causes less turf damage with its high-flotation tires.

Kinkead says Turfco's spreaders can also spread organic fertilizers, which is important as superintendents move toward using more of these products in response to environmental restrictions.

"Our goal was to create an all-in-one machine that superintendents can use for a variety of tasks," Kinkead says. "The feedback we've received indicates we have succeeded, and we'll be looking to create more uses in the future." ■

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