

Clark Talks Turf

■ TIMELY TURF ADVICE



→ Tips for the Best Performing Winter Overseeded Turfgrass

David Kopec, Ph.D., Professor of Turfgrass Science at the University of Arizona shares his tips on providing high performing overseeded turf gained from years of experience conducting research and observing overseeded turf performance on numerous golf courses.

Q Winter overseeded turf should be performing its best right now. What options are there for thin or weak areas of overseeded turf? Weak areas can be seeded with pregerminated seed. By pregerminating the seed, superintendents will gain about two weeks in improving the weak area compared to using non-pregerminated seed. Pregerminating the seed can be done by soaking the seed in water overnight. Then on the following day change the water at 8 a.m., noon and 4 p.m. Let the seed soak overnight again. Right away on the following morning, put the soaked seed in a pyramid-like pile on the floor in the maintenance facility, and out of the sun. Turn the pile every few hours during the day. Let the seed dry for one more day before spreading. The soaked seed will double in size and should be spread before the root shows.

Q What are the symptoms that overseeded putting greens need fertilization? If the putting green shows several shades of green in irregular patches throughout the green, nitrogen

is likely needed. Fertilize with up to 0.25 pounds actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet and observe the response. Be careful not to exceed 0.25 pounds actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet or the ball roll distance (green speed) will decline.

If the turfgrass is dark green but growing slowly, and you see purple on the underside of the leaf, phosphorus is most likely deficient. Use a phosphorus only fertilizer and apply approximately 0.5 pounds actual phosphorus per 1,000 square feet.

A potassium deficiency will appear as orange-bronze colored leaf margins, particularly near the tips of unmowed leaves. Potassium sulfate (K_2SO_4) can be applied (at 0.5 pounds actual K per 1,000 square feet) to address the potassium deficiency.

If you observe that the youngest leaves and leaf tips are bright yellow, and the older leaves are dark green, an iron deficiency is occurring. Ferrous sulfate ($FeSO_4$) applied at 6 ounces of product per 1,000 square feet (same as 16 lbs. product per acre) should solve the iron deficiency.

A chelated iron source can be applied before an important event to enhance green color and an application of iron will also enhance the stripping effect from the mowing pattern.

Q What about controlling weeds in the non-overseeded dormant bermudagrass roughs? In cooler weather, annual bluegrass and scattered plants of perennial ryegrass can be controlled using Round-up, or other products that contain glyphosate, Scythe (pelargonic acid) or Reward (diquat). In warmer weather, one of sulfonated urea herbicides can be used to control annual bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and depending on the herbicide applied, some broadleaf species.

Q Is traffic control necessary on overseeded turfgrass? In certain situations such as short par three holes where space is limited and other spots where traffic is confined to a small area, signs, painted lines and ropes are necessary to protect the turfgrass. Even though the overseeded grass is growing rapidly, traffic concentrated in a confined area will wear out the overseeded grass.

Q What grass should I manage for right now on my greens overseeded with a mixture of *Poa trivialis* and perennial ryegrass? Definitely manage for the *Poa trivialis*. To maintain ball roll distance and firmness, use a combination of grooming, brushing and light topdressing to get the *Poa trivialis* to provide ideal putting conditions. Don't over-fertilize which will make aggressive verticutting necessary. This will detract from playing conditions and top playing players won't like that. ■

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