



Lots of good reading about
 putting greens in this issue.
 Read what Cookson, Dushane,
 Erdahl and Otto have to say!



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PUTTING GREEN MANAGEMENT

The Wisconsin Survey

By Robert J. Erdahl

Part Two

As you may recall, the wealth of information generated by the putting green management surveys that I sent out to twenty-five Wisconsin golf course superintendents dictated a two-part article. The first part of the article appeared in the May/June 1989 edition of *THE GRASS ROOTS* and detailed the background information and the putting green fertilization programs for the twenty-five surveyed golf courses. The second half of the article will deal with the so-called "cultural practices" employed by the twenty-five golf course superintendents responding to this survey. The topics of discussion will include:

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|---------------|--------------------------|
| Aerification | Irrigation |
| Spiking | Pesticide Applications |
| Verticutting | <i>Poa annua</i> Control |
| Turf Groomers | Snow Mold Control |
| Top Dressing | Winter Protection |
| Overseeding | Wetting Agents |
| Mowing | Changing pH's |
| Rolling | Special Topics |

What better way to begin than with aerification. The very mention of this dreaded word causes the hair to stand up on the back of most golfers' necks. Even my own father is constantly complaining about how he played John Doe Country Club last week and they had the nerve to be aerifying the putting greens!

We all know that golfers dislike aerification, but that attitude can be changed through proper public relations on our part. Now what about us? Do we as golf course superintendents still feel that putting greens must be aerified every year? The results listed in Table 1 indicate a resounding yes answer to that question. In fact, only two golf courses have no scheduled putting green aerification for this year. It appears that modern soil mixes and sand top dressing programs are no substitute for regularly scheduled aerification.

Table 1 shows that the choice of equipment for putting green aerification is relatively balanced between Ryan (17) and Toro (12) with Core Master (2) just gaining a foothold in the marketplace. The overwhelming choice for tine size is 0.50" and the depth of penetration is 2.5"-3.0" for all

survey respondents except one. This one superintendent is planning to use a Core Master seven times over the course of the season with 0.25" tines at 1.0" depth of penetration.

The timing of putting green aerification was the most interesting comparison for me. Table 1 shows a balance between Spring and Fall aerification. I could find no correlation between the timing of aerification and the age of the putting greens, the soil mix, the bentgrass/*Poa annua* populations or the fertility programs. I am left to conclude that timing of putting green aerification is scheduled to disrupt the golfers as little as possible. Here are two examples: 1) All the daily fee golf courses aerify in late September or early October to coincide with their slowest time of year; and 2) Many private country clubs aerify just after the Memorial Day weekend to take advantage of a brief drop off of play after the holiday weekend.

It should be noted that six superintendents aerify many putting greens on an as-needed basis and three superintendents aerify all of their putting greens every other year. In addition, several superintendents indicate that if they would desire to overseed in conjunction with aerification they would schedule the combined operation for late August or early September.

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