

## VOYAGER VILLAGE VIGNETTE

by THOMAS C. FISCHER  
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT  
VOYAGER VILLAGE COUNTRY CLUB

Voyager Village is a 6,400 acre recreational land development with an estimated 3,400 possible homesites, of which approximately 300 lots have houses on them. Another 300 lots are used as campsites with the remaining lots purchased for land investment or retirement. About 800 sites are available on the real estate market at present.

Throughout the 6,400 acres there are eight lakes with maintained beach areas and boat landings, a small ski hill, riding stable, airstrip, clubhouse, and an 18 hole golf course. The duties of the superintendent encompass all the activities of the Village.

As for the care of the golf course there is one program that I perhaps handle differently than most superintendents due to the high quantity of sand in the greens. When I first came to Voyager in April of 1978, the greens were aerified in the fall, a standard practice. During the following spring and early summer, the course would experience many isolated dry spots on the greens, and to the dismay of the golfers, the dry areas on the greens were aerified once again and then hand-watered for two weeks to ensure that the soil was thoroughly wetted to prevent recurring dryness. By this time it would be the first of July before the greens would be in excellent condition. My next approach was to use a wetting agent along with the spot aerifying to promote healing and re-wetting of the soil.

After doing the standard practice for two years I developed a better way of eliminating those isolated dry spots on the greens by waiting until spring to aerify. That next spring I aerified around the first week in May, before the isolated dry spots had a chance to form. After coring, I verticut the plugs, dragged them in for topdressing and then soaked the greens to ensure that they were thoroughly wetted. A week or so later, a granular wetting agent was applied at the normal rate over these dry areas.

This program was very successful. By Memorial Day the greens had healed and perhaps there were still a few problem spots but only one or two per green instead of 10 to 15 per green as in previous years.

I have been doing this procedure over the past four years and believe that it has helped tremendously. Other benefits from spring aerification are more sun time and less humidity for drying the plugs which also means easier cleanup, aid in healing any winter injury, and fewer complaints from golfers prior to a season of heavy play.

## STOP PYTHIUM OUTBREAKS

by DR. R. C. BOWERS  
TUCO AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

Advance planning can mean the difference between an attractive, playable course and one riddled with an unwelcome Pythium blight infection.

Pythium blight, caused by one or more species of the water-mold fungi Pythium, is considered one of the most devastating diseases that can strike a golf course. Under optimum conditions, blocks of unprotected turf may be destroyed virtually overnight by this rapidly-spreading disease.

"Conditions are ideal for Pythium blight development when the maximum daily temperature is 85 degrees F or higher, followed by 15 or more consecutive hours with 90 percent relative humidity or above, while night temperatures remain at 68 degrees F or warmer," states Dr. R. C. Bowers, Head of Plant Health Research and Development for TUCO Agricultural Chemicals. "However, fungal growth can occur from a minimum of 40 degrees F to a maximum of 100 degrees F".

One of the nation's "hot spots" for Pythium blight development is St. Louis, Missouri. "In this area, the Pythium blight seasons starts around mid-to late-June and runs through the first or second week of September," says Denis Barron, superintendent at Cherry Hills Country Club, Glencoe, Missouri, which is located near St. Louis.