

SAND TOPDRESSING RIVER FALLS STYLE

by SCOTT AINSWORTH
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT
RIVER FALLS GOLF COURSE

Over the past several years I have read many articles and talked with countless superintendents about sand topdressing. I would like to take the opportunity to tell you how I have handled sanding greens. I established a sand topdressing program in 1977. My objective was to improve water infiltration and create a smoother, more puttalbe surface.

The procedure for aerification is much the same but the thought of creating a layer on top of a soil green is different. I aerify twice yearly, once in spring and again in the fall, using a Terra 200 roll type aerator. By going over each green twice (three and four times in bad areas) I can raise about the same number of cores as a Ryan Punch type aerator. I allow the cores to dry on the surface and add Par-Ex (20-0-16) at the rate of two to two and a half pounds Nitrogen per 1000 square feet. I overseed with Penncross where and when needed. Then comes the sand.

I chose a local mortar sand from Roberts, WI. It is a sharp sand but has a good partical distribution. Approximately 76% falls between course and medium. It has a P.H. of 7.6.

In the first years of the program, when the cores were 100% original profile, I topdressed heavily with pure sand, 1/4 inch or more. As the years went by and the sand layer began to build I put on less. My thinking is that more soil in the cores should be offset by more sand. I topdress only when I care to eliminate any chance of creating pure sand - dirty sand layers. I mix the cores, sand and fertilizer together with a verticutter in two different directions and drag it back into the holes with a small drag mat. Brushing the greens is the final step.

After eight years I have built up a layer of "dirty sand" one and one-half to two inches thick. The sand layer is fairly uniform; pure mason sand mixed with cores form the original profile. It has worked!

The greens putt better, accept water faster and compact less between aerifications.

There are drawbacks, however. The sand layer dries out too fast and it becomes hard and crusty. I have had to increase irrigation amounts two to four times. Each year that goes by I see more and more local dry spot. It has become my number one problem. The only successful treatment is wetting agents and they are short-lived.

I have another problem...what to do in the future. Now that I have a two inch layer, the cores have less and less original profile. I am faced with adding something, either soil, peat or both, to the sand before topdressing. This will keep the pure sand "dirty".

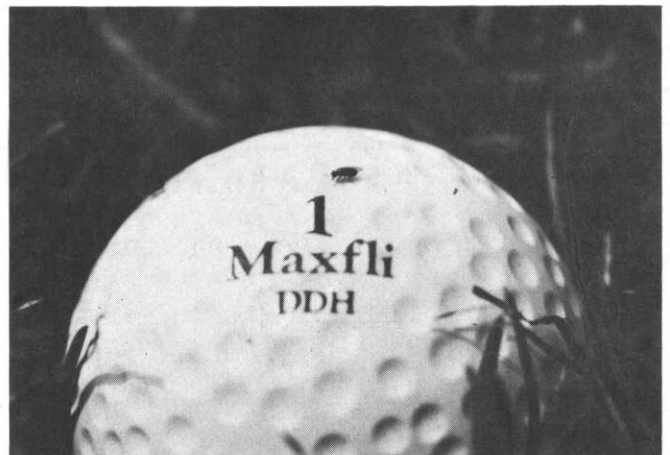
The questions I have yet to answer are: 1) What to use? 2) How to mix it? 3) Can I keep the new profile uniform as the years go by?

Topdressing greens with sand has its pros and cons. Many of us are doing it and as you are all aware, it is an on-going program we must all face. I wish us all well!

INSECT PEST OF GOLF GREENS TO BE STUDIED IN OHIO

by HARRY NIEMCZYK, Ph.D.
PROFESSOR OF TURFGRASS ENTOMOLOGY
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The frit fly, *Oscinella frit* (L.), is a small black fly often present in large numbers on golf courses and seen by golfers when it lands on white clothing or golf balls.



FRIT FLY ADULT ON GOLF BALL
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