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Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers in New Jersey by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field days, publications and "networking" with those in the sports turf industry.

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"Monthly Field Tip"

Turf Blankets by Bob Curry

Turf blankets, also called turf growth blankets, create a greenhouse effect over covered turf. Properly constructed blankets allow turf to breathe, while trapping optimum amounts of heat, light and moisture to develop an ideal environment for growth. The effect encourages deep root growth for strong, healthy plants.

Originally developed to protect natural turf against winter wind and desiccation damage, turf blankets have proven to be useful tools in all seasons. They can hasten spring green-up, especially in cold climates. In some cases, field use can begin two to three weeks sooner than normal on covered fields. Blankets can also delay dormancy of Bermuda in autumn to provide green fields late into the season.

Blankets can help expedite recovery of heavy-wear areas. They can also speed new seed germination. As an added benefit, blankets reduce seed loss, since they guard against both wind and birds.

Turf growth blankets are even used to protect against morning frost. Covering areas where frost is forecast at night can minimize or eliminate the effect.

Construction

Blankets should be treated to withstand damaging ultra-violet sun effects. They must be highly rot and mildew resistant to hold up to the elements. Properly treated blankets should not show significant wear, even after years of use.

Turf blankets should have smooth surfaces to prevent dirt and debris accumulation. They should feature lightweight construction for quick and easy installation and removal.

Whenever possible, use a one-piece cover. Avoid overlapping sections to prevent quality and color variation of covered turf. ▲

Bob Curry is president of Covermaster Inc. He also serves as STMA's commercial vice president. To contact the company, call: (800) 387-5808, or visit: www.covermaster.com.

DID YOU KNOW? Recurring weed problems may be linked to drainage patterns. (IPM Handbook)

Continued from page 1 "NJTA"

Dr. Henry Indyk received an honorary lifetime membership. Following the business meeting a panel discussion ensued entitled "Expectations of Athletic Fields." It dealt with perspectives from different individuals. Jeff Thorne, Hunterdon County Little League spoke from the perspective of a coach. Dr. Walter Mahler, Superintendent of Schools, Springfield Township, NJ gave a perspective from the administration's side. Jim Herman CSFM, Total Control, Lebanon, NJ gave his perspective from one who provides services as a contractor. Dr. Frank Rossi, Extension Specialist from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY concluded the session with the topic "Developing an IPM Program for Athletic Fields."

The participation and involvement of SFMANJ in the NJTA EXPO is very evident. Over 50 and 85 registrants attended the two-day sessions respectfully, specifically geared towards sports field management (a half day more than in 2001.)

At the General Session, Eleanor Murfitt received an award for her hard work and involvement in bringing the role of the sports field manager to the forefront as well as her dedication in developing the state's chapter of STMA. Eleanor's award is proof that SFMANJ is making an impact on the state level and will continue to grow.

If you did not have the opportunity to make it to the 2002 Expo, mark your calendar for December, 2003. SFMANJ plans once again to be there, be a part of it and to continue to be the voice of sports field managers in the State of New Jersey. ▲

George Van Haasteren, CGM is an owner of Sports Field Management Systems Inc. He is also newly elected to the board of directors for SFMANJ.

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This year Wilfred MacDonald will be celebrating its 75th year servicing those in the green industry. The company began as a small lawnmower business in Weehawken, NJ back in 1928 distributing Jacobson power reel mowers to local dealers serving the home –owner market. Wilfred (Mac) and his brother Charles both helped the business grow through the years. In 1962 the operations moved to Clifton, NJ and became a dealer for Jacobson selling turf and commercial equipment. Mac's nephew Jim Pelrine started with the company in 1963. When Mac decided to retire in 1966 he turned the reins over to Jim who then incorporated the company in his honor.

In 1977 Wilfred MacDonald was growing and a second building was added to house a new warehouse with shop operations. 14 full time employees were employed as well as 3 new salespersons being added to the staff in the early 80's. By 1995 Wilfred MacDonald was moving again to a larger site in Lyndhurst, NJ due in part to the growth in their distribution and their product line growing as well. The size of the staff also grew to 30. Preparing for the new millennium and with the company still growing in 1999 Jim with the help of his staff packed up everything and made the move from Lyndhurst to their current location in South Hackensack, NJ. Today Wilfred MacDonald has a staff of 29 employees including 6 full time salespersons, 2 On the road mechanics, 3 in-house service techs, 1 grinding tech, 1 set up man and one warehouse foreman, a service manager, an assistant service manager along with 2 full time truck drivers, 5 who handle parts, service, shipping and receivers. There are also 3 office staffers and a controller.

Wilfred MacDonald has been a strong supporter of the sports field industry. If you have been fortunate, you may have attended one of their field days at Giants Stadium. As Mike Pelrine puts it: "We try to be the best service and support turf equipment company in the area. We also want to go the extra mile for our customers because we believe that they are the most important thing to us."

For those sports field managers looking for that special piece of equipment to assist in maintaining or renovating their fields give the folks at Wilfred MacDonald a call. They are ready to assist and serve you. ▲

By George Van Haasteren CGM

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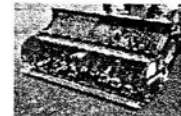
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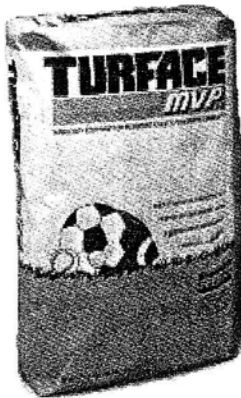
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“Avoiding Liability Lawsuits”

By Floyd Perry

Avoiding liability lawsuits is probably not part of your written job description, but it's definitely part of your day-to-day duties. Whether you're the facility manager, sports turf manager, crew chief or crew member, your action -- or lack of action—could put you and your facility at risk of time-consuming, costly litigation.

In Liability cases, lawyers focus on the three big issues: “prudent,” “reasonable” and “consistent.” More clearly defined, *prudent* means wise in handling practical matters; exercising good judgment or common sense. Would you and most people consider your actions the practical, logical thing to do under the circumstances?

Reasonable means in accordance with sound thinking; within the bounds of common sense. Would any similarly employed person, or group of people given the same set of circumstances, choose to act in the same Manner?

Consistent means uniform, reliable, steady. Are conditions the same as usual and to be expected given the past level of maintenance and the past performance level of the facility or field during similar circumstances?

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey

Any facility, on any budget, should be able to comply with the *intent* of these three issues. The key is:

- applying the best techniques given the facility's budget and equipment,
- doing it regularly and on schedule,
- documenting that you are doing so.

Basic Management Guidelines

First, assess your situation. Develop a clear picture of the practical problems that face facilities such as yours. Gain an understanding of common law pertaining to your job and responsibilities and to the jobs and responsibilities of those whose work you supervise.

Continued on page 11.....



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"RUTGERS CORNER"

"Aerification and Repair of Athletic Fields"

by Dr. James A. Murphy, Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management

Regular aerification of the turf and soil is necessary on athletic fields subjected to intense traffic, especially for soils that are highly susceptible to severe compaction. Effective aerification requires the use of equipment capable of extracting ½ to 1 inch diameter soil cores to a depth of at least 2 to 3 inches. Frequency of aerification is determined by the intensity of field use and severity of compaction. High-priority fields that receive intensive use will most likely benefit from two to four aerification treatments per season. The fall and spring seasons are the best timing for this procedure. Removing the cores or working the cores back into the turf minimizes the objections to the soil cores brought to the turf surface. Soil cores can be broken up and re-incorporation into the turf through verticutting or drag-matting the cores. Soil cores dried to the proper moisture content will be easier to break-up and work back into the turf.

Deep Subsurface Aerification. Many old athletic fields that were established on soils that are highly susceptible to compaction will benefit from deep subsurface areification, which will create ½- to 1-inch diameter holes to a soil depth of 6 to 16 inches. This aggressive form of aerification can alleviate deep compaction of the soil, thereby improving water drainage, as well as infiltration and turf performance. The equipment needed is expensive to purchase, however, it can be readily contracted from local vendors. Cost for contracting will vary; but it is commonly priced for pennies per square foot of field area. Treatment with deep aerification equipment has sufficiently improved many older sports turfs and, as a result, helped avoid the high costs of reconstruction. It is important to note that deep aerification will not solve compaction problems associated with improper construction practices (i.e., severely compacted subgrades that limit drainage of water).

Repair. Many factors can contribute to a weakening or loss of turf. But intensive use is often the primary factor associated with severe loss of turf, particularly on finer-textured soils with slow drainage. A good turf can be restored on worn-out fields through renovation procedures, except for the cases that requiring reconstruction

(initial construction was incorrect). Renovation may involve eliminating weed infestations, applying lime and fertilizer, aerifying, overseeding/silt-seeding with a mixture of appropriate turfgrasses, verti-grooving, and dragging/brushing to mix the seed with the soil. Because of rapid establishment and excellent wear tolerance, the improved turf-type perennial ryegrasses or turf-type tall fescues should be considered for overseeding or reseeding mixtures. Refer to Rutgers Cooperative Extension publications FS108, "Renovation of Turf," and FS989 and FS990, "Perennial Ryegrass and Tall Fescue Varieties for New Jersey," respectively, for more information. Renovation is an effective means of introducing seed into an existing turf without destroying the existing grasses, grade, or contour. It will not, however, solve drainage problems, which require partial or complete reconstruction. Late summer through early fall is the best time for repairs. Where the field is actively used for football, the procedure can be successfully per-formed in late fall or early winter; success for this timing is dependent on soil and weather conditions. Early spring would be the next best time for renovating football fields. Where use of the field cannot be restricted to permit adequate establishment of a new seeding, sod should be considered for the establishment of a turf.

Please refer to Rutgers Cooperative Extension publications FS105, FS684, and FS738 for more detailed information.

These can downloaded for free at <http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/category.asp?cat=5> ▲

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“On the Subject of Soil Fertility”

by Jim Hermann, CSFM

Over the course of my career in turf management, from my earliest involvement in residential turf to my current obsession with sports turf I have had the opportunity to use different nitrogen sources on different sites. I have experienced different results in different situations. The different results I have obtained were many times caused by a lack of understanding on my part on how the different nitrogen sources react in the soil and how the turf responds to their use. The objective of this article is to inform you of one such experience in the hope that you can possibly gain some useful information.

Nitrogen comes in different forms. There are liquids, granules, prills and powders. The bacteria in the soil can make some nitrogen sources available to the plant. Nitrogen can be cold-water soluble, warm-water soluble or water insoluble. It can be sulfur coated, polymer coated or combined with any number of products used to control the release pattern. It can have a lower salt index or a higher salt index. Some nitrogen sources are available to the turf almost immediately and others take years to become available. An understanding of the release characteristics of different nitrogen sources is essential in formulating a fertility program. It is the responsibility of the sports turf manager to select the most effective nitrogen source while taking into consideration objectives and existing conditions.

Choosing the best nitrogen source for a given situation or objective is not always as simple as it might seem. You can't assume that the most expensive source is the best nor can you eliminate the least costly from consideration. The nitrogen source you choose depends on what you want to accomplish. Before I discuss a situation I encountered this past season, I would first like to explain some of the objectives I am attempting to achieve in my fertility program.

My first priority is to address soil pH and apply any necessary lime based on a soil test. My second priority is to develop a plan to bring both potassium and phosphorous to optimum levels.

You can sometimes apply the entire amount of potassium and phosphorous recommended by a soil test in one application. This concentrates the fertilizer formulation on the potassium and phosphorous needs of the turf, with nitrogen as a secondary consideration. If you decide to apply all the phosphorous and potassium in one application, always be aware of the maximum amounts that can safely be applied without turf damage.

Another possibly more popular option is to use a product formulated with a nitrogen/phosphorous/potassium ratio such as 4-1-2, 4-2-2, 4-2-4 etc. that will supply your nitrogen needs along with fulfilling your potassium and phosphorous requirements over the course of an entire season, utilizing multiple applications. The seriousness of the individual nutrient deficiencies will sometimes determine your individual fertility strategy.

I personally prefer to address phosphorous and potassium needs independent of nitrogen. By addressing nutrient needs separately I have the ability to be more selective with the individual nutrient sources and select the source that I feel will work the best under the circumstances. I am therefore not dependent on standard fertilizer formulations that are sometimes formulated with nutrient sources I might prefer not to use at a particular time of year or for a particular purpose.

I am responsible for the turf management of a little league baseball field. I had a soil test completed on this field in July in preparation for the fall fertilizer program. The test results showed that the pH of 6.5 was adequate but showed a need for phosphorous in the amount of 50 pounds per acre and a need for potassium in the amount of 60 pounds per acre. Both levels were reported as good but not optimum. As I stated earlier, I strive for optimum levels of all major nutrients.

Continued on next page..



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were already falling below freezing and growth had slowed considerably. The time line discussed here may not coincide with fields located further south or in a warmer location.

After the last mowing I wanted to continue to promote root development and lateral growth with an application of nitrogen and remember, I still needed to address the potassium and phosphorous requirements of the soil as per my soil test. For this purpose I chose an agricultural grade 10-20-20 fertilizer to be applied at the rate of 1.5 lbs. potassium and phosphorous per thousand sq. ft. This rate would closely fulfill the potassium and phosphorous requirements along with giving me $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. nitrogen per thousand square feet. By waiting until this time of year to address the potassium and phosphorous needs of the turf I was able to use muriate of potash as my potassium source. This product is less expensive per unit of potassium but has a higher salt index than some other potassium sources. I felt it would be safe at this time of year at this rate with no burn potential. The nitrogen in the 10-20-20 is all fast acting water-soluble nitrogen. Again, at this time of year at this rate I didn't feel there would be a problem. With cooler temperatures and higher moisture levels I wasn't as concerned with volatilization into the air or a slow release pattern as I would have been when the weather was warmer and drier. All in all I was able to use a relatively inexpensive product to achieve my objectives.

It is again important to realize that I was dealing with an established baseball field that would have 3 people in the outfield in the spring with minimal traffic. I might have elected to apply more than $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. nitrogen at this time with some slow release if I were more concerned with early spring green up and growth as would likely be the case with a soccer field.

Although I may see some late season response from the nitrogen in color improvement and a small amount of growth, I won't know the total results of my late season fertilization until next spring. The turf likely used some of the nitrogen in the fall and some will be held in the soil for utilization in the spring. At any rate I don't anticipate the need for additional fertilizer on that field until mid May. Only a visual evaluation in the spring will tell the tale.

In closing I would like to suggest that if a person suggests to you that he or she could give you a product at a cheaper cost that would do the same thing, always consider the source. ▲

Note: The intent of this article is not to promote any one nutrient source as the best or to say one is superior to another. The intent is to give you different circumstances, and options available for satisfying the nutritional needs of athletic field turf. If you have an experience you would like to share or have any questions or comments contact me at Jimtc@worldnet.att.net or (908) 236-9118

Jim Hermann is President of Total Control Landscape & Athletic Turf Maintenance. He is also vice president of Sports Field Managers Association of NJ and co-editor of this newsletter. He recently became the second certified sports field manager in New Jersey.

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