

Upside-down harrow saves time, money

Using a Fuerst harrow upside down may sound ridiculous, but one golf course superintendent is doing just that...and saving time and money in the process.

Bruce Jackman, superintendent of the Clarkston Golf and Country Club in Clarkston, Wash., uses the harrow smooth-side down to break up aerifier plugs. The process takes him less than half the time he used to spend pushing the cores off the greens by hand.

Jackman, whose greens are almost completely sand-based, cautions that the technique may not work on other types of greens. "I sure recommend it for greens like mine," Jackman says. "I don't know how it would be for soft ones or clay, but for sand greens it's super."

Jackman starts by making sure his greens aren't too wet, just wet enough

that his Ryan aerifier will go to a three-inch depth with the spike. Then he lets the greens dry for 10 or 15 minutes.

The key step is to drag the harrow, smooth-side down, on the back of a golf cart. On Jackman's greens, each measuring 4,000 to 5,000 sq. ft., it takes about 10 minutes to break up the cores.

Next, Jackman explains, he uses a blower to blow away the debris. He follows this with a Lelly containing sand and a sand ring in it to spread the sand. Again, he uses the harrow and brushes to drag the sand into the holes.

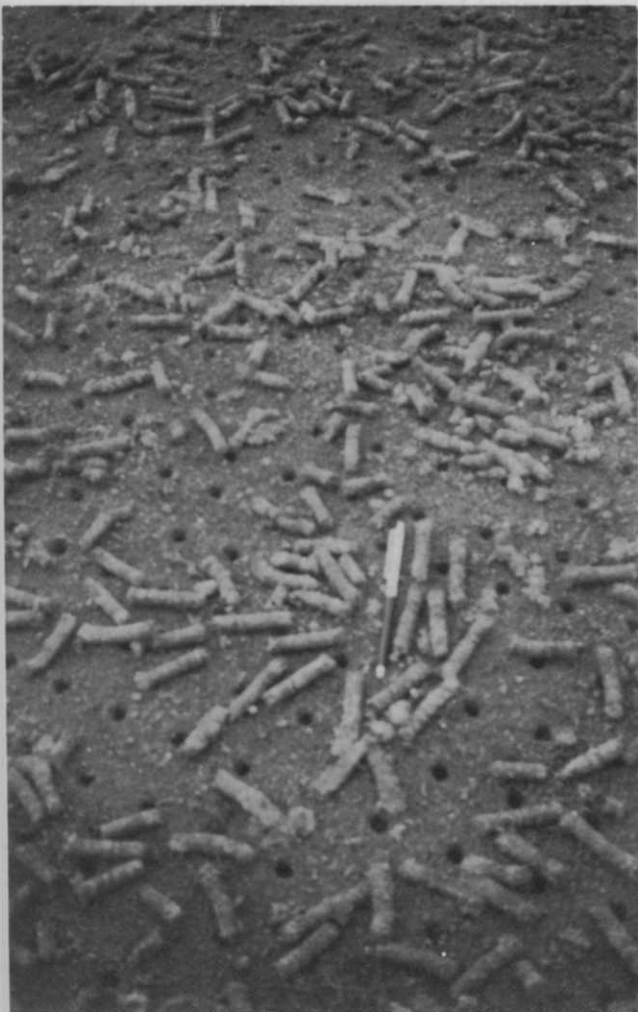
"The little bit of sand the harrow doesn't get into the holes, the brushes do," Jackman says. "Within an hour or an hour and a half, I'm ready to turn the water on, and the people can play

golf on them, and they'd never know they've been aerated."

Jackman estimates he saves about three man-hours per green or about 54 hours for the entire process. "We used to set aside a full week to do the 18 holes. Now, I can start Monday morning, and, if I have good weather, I'm done Tuesday night."

Jackman says it's important to remember what type of aerifier one uses. His Ryan leaves lips, so to cap them, he must drag the harrow in the opposite direction of the aerifier. With some aerifier models, the harrow can actually be pulled directly behind the aerifiers.

Jackman says his process works not only on greens, but fairways and pathways as well. "They may think I'm nuts, but I do it, and it's cheaper and it does a good job."



Aerifier plugs before dragging with an upside down Fuerst harrow.



Aerifier plugs after dragging.