

# PROBLEM MANAGEMENT

by Balakrishna Rao, Ph.D.

## Can courses afford a day off?

**Problem:** *Has any study been made of the extra expense that we probably absorb by keeping our golf courses in use seven days a week instead of six? (New Jersey)*

**Solution:** I am not familiar with any studies dealing with golf course maintenance expenses. I was also unable to obtain any pertinent data for your question from the National Golf Foundation (NGF), Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, or USGA Greens Section.

A representative of the NGF said, "They prefer six days of play instead of seven because of concentrated maintenance schedule and then having a day of rest. If the golf course is shut off a day, the turfgrass quality will be improved. The players are likely to pay higher greens fees. Some people may prefer to keep the courses open seven days per week. In this situation it is difficult to maintain the quality. Many of the public courses are under this pressure without choice. They keep the courses open seven days a week."

From this discussion it appears that from an agronomic standpoint, it is better to have at least a one-day rest period to produce a quality play area. The anticipated extra revenue from one extra day of play may break even with the expenses for maintenance and wear-and-tear on the course. My general feeling is that it is best to keep the course open for six days instead of seven.

We will keep you updated if any of our readers respond with statistical data.

## Replenishing 'other' nutrients

**Problem:** *A lot of research has been done on nitrogen fertilization of cool-season turfgrass, particularly amount and timing of nitrogen. But what about phosphorus and potash and the micro-nutrients? After testing for these nutrients, do we correct the soil pH? Should we deep-place the nutrients after aerifying? Or do we topdress with a commercial fertilizer blend that comes close to the recommendation? (Minnesota)*

**Solution:** If the nutrient analysis indicates that there is a deficiency of phosphorus, potassium and micro-nutrients, then they should be applied to correct the problem. Most people use fertilizer with nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium at a 4:1 or 4:1:2 ratio. Macronutrient deficiencies are most commonly found in the Pacific Northwest or the Gulf States and are rarely found in other areas.

As far as the second question, the answer is yes; pH correction is needed after testing for these nutrients. Having the pH in the proper range (pH 6.0 to 7.0) will maximize the availability of nutrients.

In many situations, correcting the pH alone may not be sufficient to remedy the problem. A supplemental fertilizer application would be beneficial. Applications at the recommended rate can be made

after aerifying for deeper placement or can be broadcast on the surface.

Remember that a surface application of phosphorus is not beneficial because it doesn't move readily. Therefore, deeper placement of phosphorus would be beneficial to turfgrass. Topdressing fertilizer would be all right except for phosphorus for the above-mentioned areas.

## Adding iron to fertilizer

**Problem:** *What iron can I add to my granular fertilizer to avoid staining concrete surfaces? (New Jersey)*

**Solution:** From your question, I understand that you are interested in adding a granular formulation of iron to granular fertilizers. I am not familiar with any granular formulations of iron currently available. Lesco Inc. is currently working on a dry granular formulation of iron which they hope to market by late 1990 or 1991.

As you may be aware, there are a number of granular fertilizers that contain iron. You could consider using them if they meet your need.

All of the iron-containing products on the market now or the one Lesco is going to produce will have the staining problem on porous surfaces such as concrete. Although this is difficult and time-consuming, these stains can be removed by cleaning with materials such as muriatic acid, citric acid or sulfuric acid. Reports indicate that you have to be very careful in handling or using these. If these products come in contact with turfgrass they can be phytotoxic. A representative from Lesco indicated that they will have a product called "stain eraser," a stain-removing compound, by spring.

LM



Balakrishna Rao is Manager of Technical Resources for the Davey Tree Co., Kent, Ohio.

Questions should be mailed to Problem Management, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow 2-3 months for an answer to appear in the magazine.