

JOB TALK

Supers find conservation, efficiency in PGRs

In the never-ending challenge to maintain healthy, good-looking turf, many golf course superintendents are searching for new and more efficient ways to promote and maintain quality turf while conserving water and using labor more efficiently.

Brae Burn C.C.

Dennis Flynn, superintendent at Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, N.Y., recently began using Elanco's Cutless 50W plant growth regulator.

Flynn first tried Cutless on his 10th fairway, which was thick with *Poa annua* and needed much watering. After several years' use, he now estimates that water use has been reduced by about 10 percent. The turf transpires less, he says, which reduces turfgrass water use so irrigation frequency can be reduced.

Middle Bay C.C.

Growth regulators can also reduce mowing frequency.

"With Cutless, we probably reduced our clippings by about 50 percent during the four to five weeks of growth suppression in the spring," says Flynn. "We were able to ease off our regular seven-day mowing sched-

ule and only cut three times a week." Flynn has also lowered the mowing height from 3/4- to 1/2-inch because of the increased amount of bentgrass on the fairways. As a result, equipment use and labor have been reduced, especially in the spring, when workers are better employed cleaning up the course, working on bunkers and getting the course ready for play.

Conserving water

New projects at the Middle Bay Country Club in Oceanside, N.Y. have included application of growth regulators on bentgrass fairways. Superintendent John Carlone selected two fairways to treat because of their contrasting locations. "One was inland and the other was along the ocean," Carlone explains. "The links portion of our course gets a lot of sea breeze and has a sandy soil profile. I applied Cutless on both areas to see if there was any difference in its activity. I haven't seen any significant differences in its effectiveness or growth reduction capabilities in either area. It seems to work well under all the conditions here."

Both Carlone and Flynn mention reduced watering as a great benefit of

using Cutless. Carlone has been able to use less water every time he irrigates treated fairways. He says that before using a growth regulator, it was not uncommon for him to water each fairway 20 to 25 minutes per night. That time has been reduced to 12 to 15 minutes. Areas adjacent to the ocean still require more due to drying effects.

Bentgrass thrives

Flynn says his fairways contain more bentgrass now than before he used Cutless. He estimates a 50 percent increase in bentgrass population, and a shorter, denser turf in fairways.

By using Cutless in conjunction with lightweight mowing, proper aerification, overseeding and verticutting, Carlone says he has improved the bentgrass/*Poa* ratio to about 60/40 on the ninth fairway and 70/30 on the 16th fairway. Four years ago, he was looking at a mere 10 percent bentgrass population.

Carlone and Flynn report a slight yellowing of the turf immediately after treating it with Cutless. This is a temporary side-effect, as the growth regulator soon takes effect and the bentgrass gradually becomes denser. **LM**

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