

'LEAST MANAGEMENT TIPS'

CONSIDERATION	NORMAL MANAGEMENT	'LEAST MANAGEMENT'
Scarification	2 to 3 times per year	as needed
Mowing	twice a week	once a week
Edging	once a month	twice a year
Irrigation	supplemental	supplemental
Fertilization	spring, summer, fall	spring, fall
Overseeding	late fall	none (heavy fall fertilization)
Weed Control	pre-/post-emergence herbicides	pre-emergence herbicides
Insect/Disease Control	as needed	none
Aeration	2 to 3 times per year	as needed for compaction

Source: the author

Diamond-Dry, which can be raked into the infield mix to bring a too-wet field into playable condition.

Mowing frequency is determined by budget. Though most turf managers can't devote time to creating a striping pattern in the grass, all alter directions with each mowing to maintain a cleaner cut.

Where funds are available, the infield and skinned areas receive some type of supplemental irrigation. Even the money-strapped facilities have found that it's more costly to rebuild a turf field than to keep it alive by watering.

Soil testing once a year for pH and fertility levels is a wise budgetary move. The test results help tailor fertilization programs to specific needs, possibly cutting

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fertility needs.

The optimum time to verticut and dethatch bermudagrass is during the playing season, which is advantageous for the turf but not good for the playing schedule. A compromise is often made, tackling these procedures only as neces-

sary, and timing them as late in the season as possible, but early enough so the grass is still actively growing. Fertilizer is a big variable in maintenance programs. Turf managers with smaller budgets use the slow-release fertilizer products to stretch fertilization benefits over a longer period.

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Use customer complaints to secure company loyalty

■ If one of your customers—whether he be a landscape client, a member of the golf course, a citizen using one of your athletic fields—has a complaint, you have a tremendous opportunity to build customer loyalty, but it depends on how you choose to satisfy that complaint.

A survey by the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs shows that whenever customer complaints are successfully resolved, 73 percent of the complainers would return to buy that product or ser-

vice again.

Conversely, when customers had minor problems but did not complain, nearly 67 percent would not buy the same product or service again. The three reasons mentioned most often for not complaining were:

- Customers felt complaining wasn't worth their time and effort
- They believed complaining wouldn't do any good;
- They didn't know how to or where

to address complaints.

To handle complaints successfully, and better insure customer loyalty, you should:

- 1) Listen to the customer's entire complaint. Don't interrupt; let them say all that's on their minds;
- 2) Sympathize with them, and be sure to communicate sincerity;
- 3) Avoid justifying or making excuses; the customer doesn't want to hear any excuses;
- 4) Ask questions;
- 5) Agree on a course of action;
- 6) Inform and involve others who need to know;
- 7) Monitor the progress in resolving the complaint.