

Tee recipe:

FEED WELL, AERATE OFTEN

It also helps if the golfers cooperate. These two superintendents know to keep tees healthy and neat.

Spikes marks and ball divots damage greens.

Tees, on the other hand, get spiked, but they also get thumped by golfers' clubs, and, particularly on Par 3s, shredded by irons.

To keep tees in shape, you

need help from golfers in addition to smart agronomics.

Jerry Coldiron's golfers are good about using the divot mix stationed on all par 3 tees and shorter par 4s, but he doesn't hesitate to jump in with crew support.

Aerify four times/year

"Everyone concentrates on green aeration, but it's very easy to let tee aeration slip away," says Corey Eastwood, superintendent at Stockdale Country Club, Bakersfield, Calif.

"Tees should be aerated four times a year if the seasons allow it," says Eastwood. "Follow with your green mix topdressing to improve percolation and compaction."

"Build tees as large as possible," advises Eastwood. "Make tee enlargement a priority unless turf areas are restricted by government agencies.

"Mow tees in a square or rectangular pattern. You'd be surprised how many square feet this will add to playable tee area.

"If tees must be round or oval, only do the cleanup lap once per week. This will eliminate the mower wear area on both ends of the tees.

"Have the outside edges of the tees directed down the line of flight. This eliminates complaints that, 'the tee markers are never straight.'"

Other Eastwood tee tips:

▶ Fertilize every three to four weeks, along with the greens.

▶ Use a good, slow-release fertilizer.

Don't try to save a couple dollars per bag.

▶ Fill or seed divots weekly.

▶ In most cases, strip and level tees every five years. This will keep up with settling on the edges and a build-up in the middle due to topdressing.

"We use the sand buckets with ryegrass seed mixed in.

On downtimes, we send a crew around with the sand mix," says Coldiron, who also follows an aggressive fertility program at Boone Links/Lassing Pointe in Florence, Ky., as does Corey Eastwood of Stockdale Country Club, Bakersfield, Calif. (see sidebar).

"We have the sand-based, bentgrass tees on Lassing Pointe and the push-up clay tees at Boone Links, which are bluegrass/ryegrass," explains Coldiron. "They're all beginning to transform to the ryegrass, because we've gone to an aggressive topdressing program. We use a seed blend that contains a lighter colored rye, that tends to match in with the bentgrass. We do get some growth variations with the ryegrass, but we're mowing tees

often enough that it's really not a problem.

"But the reality of it is, on a par 3s, with the amount of play and divots that we have, there's just no way to keep the bent aggressive, even though we went with Penncross."

Move the markers

"We have a system in which rangers and employees in the Turf Center move the tee markers many times each day," says Coldiron. "Between the clubhouse staff and our staff, we keep those things hopping, especially on busy days. We can run 300-400 golfers through. If those markers aren't moved, you can tell right off the bat." **LM**

Golfers at Boone Links/Lassing Pointe are good about using divot repair sand.

