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Have we lost our ability to think...????????

The Industry is starting to change to a new breed of common sense thinkers in regards to what it takes to maintain our golf greens at a level that we only wished for in the past but seldom attained, and were in most cases unable to maintain once we did obtain that high level we were seeking.

A golf course superintendent in upstate NY phoned me last night that his new green had a 20% loss of turf and the cause had been diagnosed as "Pythium Root Dysfunction" by the soils lab at Rutgers University. The superintendent then phoned Dr. Lane Tredway at North Carolina State University who is the industry's leading expert when it comes to this disease and Dr. Tredway recommended building up the nutrient and water holding of the green. The superintendent then phoned me with my thoughts on what would be the best way to achieve this increase in CEC [nutrient holding] and water retention. My recommendation was to aerify as deeply as possible and inject an 80/20 of sand and an inorganic amendment into the Aerification holes. The inorganic amendment would provide us with the nutrient and water holding we needed. He agreed and had already ordered the inorganic amendment [When using an inorganic amendment never use more than an 80/20 mix.]

A LITTLE RESEARCH AND A LOT OF COMMON SENSE.

Now was that so difficult.

Could this situation have been avoided by using a different mix in this new green? **The answer is yes.**

Three years into my research at ISTRC I found that the leading cause of turf failure in sand based greens was too high of an organic matter in the top 1 to 2 inches of the greens. This deposit of organic matter is a natural part of the aging process of the turf. Mother Nature is being very good to us by giving us this naturally produced material [Organic Matter] that provides us with water and nutrient holding, as well as being food for our microbes. All we had to do was learn how to manage it, which we are starting to do.

However.....All that many in the industry heard from my research was that Organic Matter was the cause of green failures and with this limited stupid thinking we as an industry started to back off of adding organic matter into our new green mix's, resulting in an insufficient amount of food and water being available to our plants.

Dr. Tredway recommends that mixes contain at least 15% organic matter by volume and I could not agree more. When the USGA specifications for new green construction were written at Texas A & M under the guidance of DR. Marvin Ferguson in the early to mid fifties and published in 1960 they had a

category called water or moisture holding, which has been largely ignored by many in our industry, and one that is of the utmost importance in today's world of new grasses and low mowing heights.

Under the category of how to treat the symptoms of "Pythium Root Dysfunction" we find a list of chemicals with how and in what quantities to apply the chemicals.

I am glad to say that this golf course superintendent in upstate NY is attacking the **cause** and not the symptoms. This superintendent is under attack from the members for something that is the result of things that were done before he arrived at the course this past January. I hope that the management team can hold off the membership until the greens turn around, as this superintendent is one of the really, really good ones in our industry.

HE HAS NOT LOST HIS ABILITY TO THINK AND USE COMMON SENSE.

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