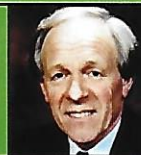


Where the grass is always greener



Greencraft
With Dave Bracey

More tips on seeding up

WITH greens having been affected this year by lack of rain, the major job as soon as possible is to get the greens moist to a depth of six inches to allow the grass to function as it did last Spring.

The amount of aeration done during the Winter has a big influence on how much water is filtered to the lower levels of the green and into the drainage layers. Much of this water is held through the Winter and after Spring rolling to seal the surface, this water is then taken up through the soil by the plant and re-used by the turf.

Consequently, very little irrigation will be required until the end of July. If I need to use a hose before the end of July on my own green, then there has not been sufficient aeration carried out throughout the closed season.

HINTS

Soak the green: Where the green has been mown short prior to watering and scarifying, it might take several hours of continuous watering to make an impression on a very dry surface down to two inches. The slightly raised areas of a green will shed water into the lower areas.

Using forks: Work the fork at three to four inch centres and move the fork forwards and backwards just a little to enlarge the hole. This action will allow the water a freer passage down to the lower levels, and the aeration will also benefit the turf.

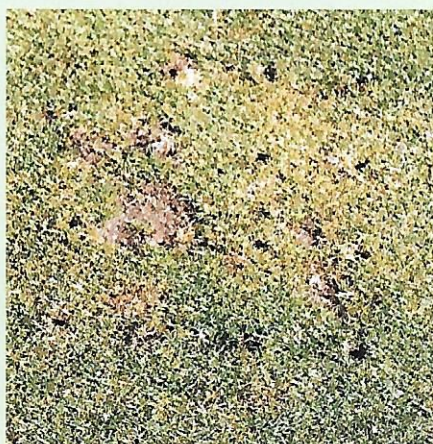
Any dry areas, high spots particularly, must be forked intensively to get the area as wet as possible whilst the turf is still warm. This forking operation can coincide with scarifying (scratching) particularly as the turf will be moist and these are the best conditions for cleaning out the debris that has occurred during the season.

Keep the green moist: Any storm water or heavy rains will be able to penetrate without causing surface waterlogging, the main cause of grass seed not germinating efficiently.

Make the most of warm days and each morning remove the dew as this warms up the surface area very much quicker and assists germination. On a very dewy



Above: Close up of hand forking in progress. 100mm between holes allowing excess water to drain away. **Below:** Where divots have to be repaired, deep forking will allow seed to germinate more efficiently.



morning, rub the back of your hand against the dew and you will realise the temperature is quite cold, 2-3 degrees centigrade.

Just a few minutes after the dew has been removed you will notice that the temperature has been raised considerably and the grass can carry on functioning.

It is vital that one understands that the seed of the *Fescue* grass be inserted into the soil (not the thatch) at a depth of 13mm as this enables the seed to

absorb the water from the soil instead of a watering can which would only bring the seed to the surface.

Depending on the warmth of the soil (5-6 degrees centigrade), the seed will lay in the surface at the required depth in the dark and these are all requirements of successful germination.

One of the other grasses mainly used in fine turf production is *Agrostis* and this grass, with eight million seeds to the kilo, must only settle on the surface. Consequently, this seed suffers more from the cold and takes longer to germinate. Once germinated, it is vital to remove the dew to assist the continuous growth of the plant. This seeding operation is best carried out in mid March and April as the weather warms up.

Divot marks in the green take much longer to recover, but once again the use a fork should ensure that the area does not get waterlogged.

The general spiking of the green during the Winter, ideally once a week, will ensure any rain will go down into the turf and not evaporate from the surface.

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