



David Bracey

Top expert helps to keep your green in trim

Hollow Tining and Rolling

You should introduce a rolling programme in the middle of March to begin firming up the green for the new season.



IT'S important that a bowling green is hollow tined every third year, principally to reduce the density of the turf.

With a well aerated turf, the roots can spread in search of food (nutrients) quite quickly, whereas turf that has not been hollow tined will not develop satisfactorily.

When we hollow tine, we remove cores of soil which allows the turf to breathe and provides space for sideways movement. In essence, this is reducing the density of the soil.

These holes must be left open for two weeks to allow gases to escape, encourage bacterial activity and quick deep root development.

After two weeks, solid tines are required to close up the holes and to create many fresh spike holes for new root development.

If hollow tining is not carried out then the turf will always be lifting, and this will be exacerbated if top dressing is applied each year.

By hollow tining the green in moist conditions you will achieve a maximum

depth of penetration and removal of between four and six tonnes of material. If this practice is carried out, then the green will remain at the same distance from the drainage system and will bowl faster because excess water will escape quicker.

If hollow tining is not carried out, and top dressing is applied annually, then the distance between the top of the bank and the surface of the green will soon become less than the regulation minimum of nine inches.

Provided there is at least four inches of root zone beneath the turf in reasonably good condition then a good green can quite easily be produced.

In the main, providing good turf culture practises are carried out, including adequate aeration for the benefit of the soil organisms and roots and adequate cleaning out of the debris that is produced during the Summer months, then the green should be in good condition to recover during the Winter in preparation for the Spring.

WHEN you have completed as much as possible of the preparation work by the middle of March, then it will be time to start to firm up the green ready for the new season.

The correct use of the roller comes into operation about this time, and this means a light, fairly brisk rolling, initially with a light roller up to a maximum 5cwt. The effect of rolling is controlled by the speed of travel. For instance, the faster you go, the less effect the roller will have on the turf.

When conditions are suitable - dry on the top and moist underneath - the same roller can be used at a much slower pace and the rolling effect will be increased.

This process can be maintained until the middle of April, when the green settles down and dries out.

Last Spring, for example, if you had not embarked on a rolling programme in the middle of March, there would have been no further opportunities in April, as the weather was so dry, so consequently greens were much slower than expected.