

Yarn # 20
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Govt. regulations for military golf courses
And
How they will help us all

Earlier this year I was asked to attend and participate in a week long training session in San Antonio, Texas at the main training center for the U.S. Air Force. The training session was for Golf Course Superintendents and General Managers of Air Force Golf Courses throughout the world. My portion of the training session was to conduct a three hour seminar on the Physical Properties of golf greens and how to obtain **balanced** physical properties.

My part of the training session was to consist of two 1 & ½ hour sessions. After the first session an edict was delivered announcing that all military golf courses would reduce water consumption by 20% over the next 10 years. A similar edict concerning chemical usage had gone into effect a few months earlier. After the normal moans and groans, and after the new edict had been digested, I finished my session with statistics showing that **balanced physical properties in golf greens result in more effective use of both chemicals and water.**

If greens are too porous they are incapable of holding and retaining nutrients and moisture. The chemicals that are applied move through our greens mix and into the greens drains and the same is true of the water that we apply.

When greens are out of balance with low infiltration/percolation rates than the reverse is true and the water that is applied runs off the surface of the green. The chemicals that are applied cannot be effective as they cannot be taken up by the plant that is under stress from lack of oxygen.

The attendees at the training session, after much discussion came to the conclusion that they needed more information in regards to what they were dealing with in their greens. The seriousness of the issue was evident to me when the discussion lasted into the early evening hours. [And this at the end of their fourth day of eight hour classes.] As the session went on it was agreed by all that wetting agents would be a very valuable tool, but which one should be used? A wetting agent that holds water or one that moves water? The selection of which type needs to be determined by **science** identifying what type of physical properties exists in the greens.

By using a physical properties report based on **science** and by identifying what is in our greens in 1 inch increments we are able to determine how deep we should aerify and if we should fill the holes or leave them open as well as the size of tine needed and the most effective spacing. It is very possible that on some newer greens we might only need to use small solid tines to achieve the desired results.

The Military is going green when it comes to golf greens and the results of their actions will be monitored by us here at ISTRC over the next few years, and will allow us to provide the industry with the documented results of what each course was able to accomplish, and how, in regards to balancing the physical properties of their golf greens.

Although the military courses have ten years to comply with the new edicts, many of the superintendents felt confident that they could accomplish the 20% water reduction in less time than the 10 years allotted without sacrificing quality of product.

With what we have learned from working with your courses over these last 15 years, I feel confident that this project could be a major step forward in how we treat our greens now and in the future.

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