40 Years of Rootzone Management Research: *Have Things Changed?*

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RMRTA
CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW
The Ranch Events Complex
DECEMBER 13-15, 2022

1

2

Donald Ross 1927

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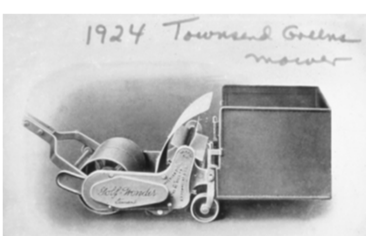
THE FIFTH GREEN AT THE ESSEX COUNTY COUNTRY CLUB

1930 Advertisement

4

Closer cut mowers



As low as 0.25”

5

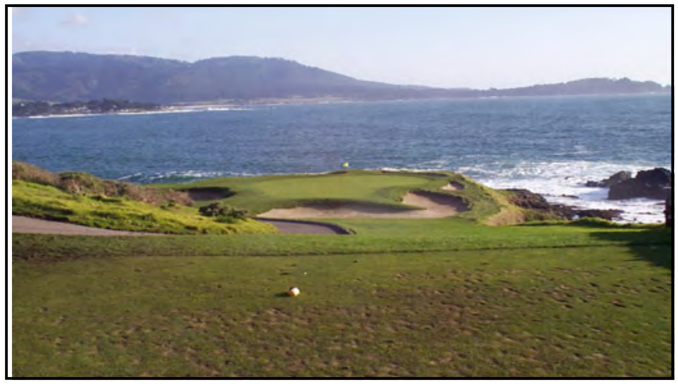
In 1932, a fruit farmer, Orton Englehardt, invented the impact sprinkler.

6

USGA Method of Putting Green Construction

- Original Specifications in 1960
  - Since then, this method has been regularly researched, improved and amended
- Other methods
  - California Style (1990)
  - Purr-wick (1966)
  - Dutch Green (1960-70; primarily the Netherlands)
  - Native soil or push-up greens

7



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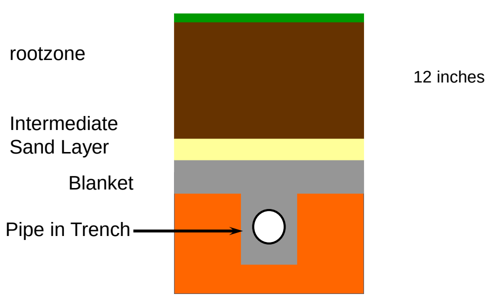
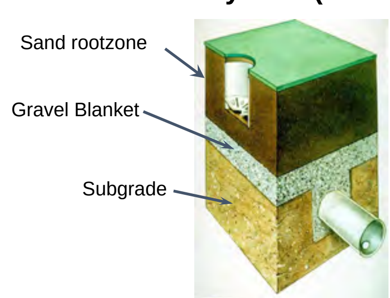
10

Three Tier (USGA) System



11

Two Tier System (USGA)



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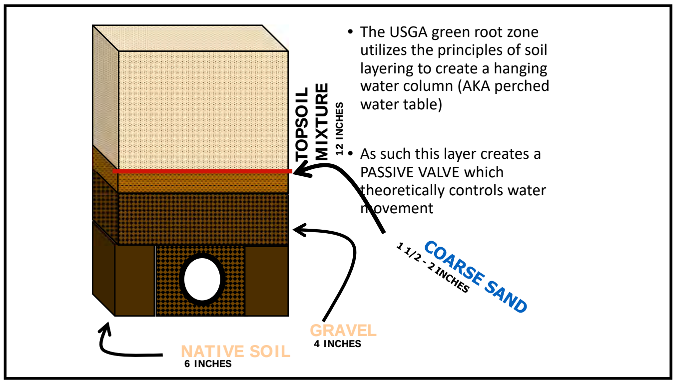

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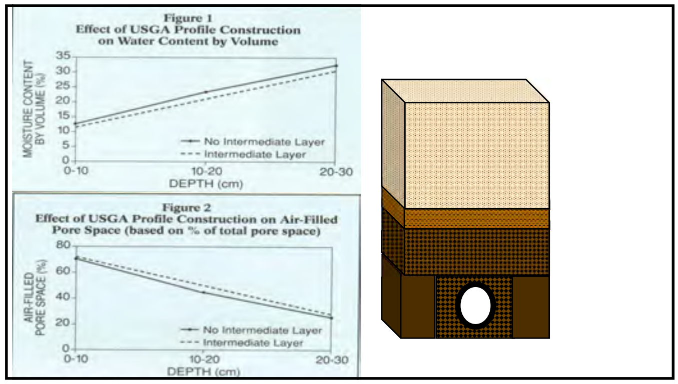

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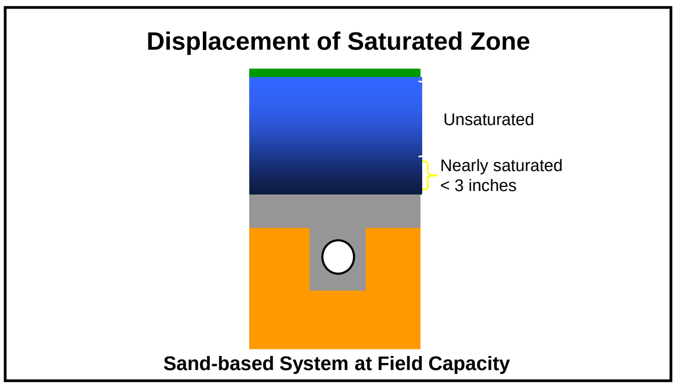

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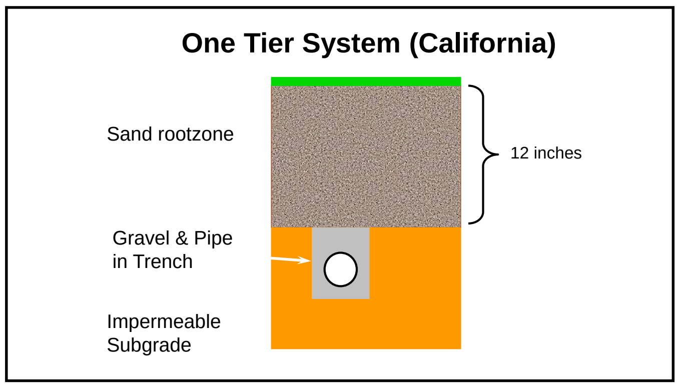


16

Physical properties of sand-based root zones over time

17

Objectives

- Develop a better understanding of the impact of grow-in procedures on putting green establishment and performance.
- Investigate temporal changes in the soil physical properties of USGA putting greens.

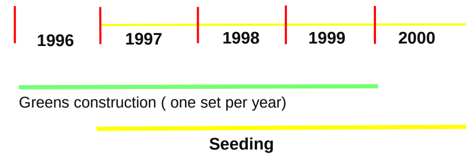
18

Materials and Methods

- Field experiment initiated in 1997
- Greens constructed every year for four years
- Two rootzone mixtures
  - 80:20 Sand:Peat (v:v)
  - 80:15:5 Sand:Peat:Soil (v:v:v)
- Two establishment treatments
  - Accelerated
  - Controlled

19

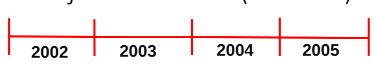
Project Schedule (Phase I)



Data collection on soil physical, chemical, and microbial characteristics influenced by root zone materials and grow-in procedures.

20

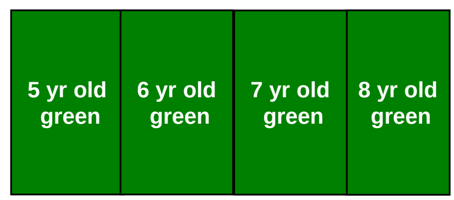
Project Schedule (Phase II)



Data collection on soil physical and chemical characteristics as influenced by age, root zone materials and grow-in procedures.

21

Materials and Methods



As of 2004

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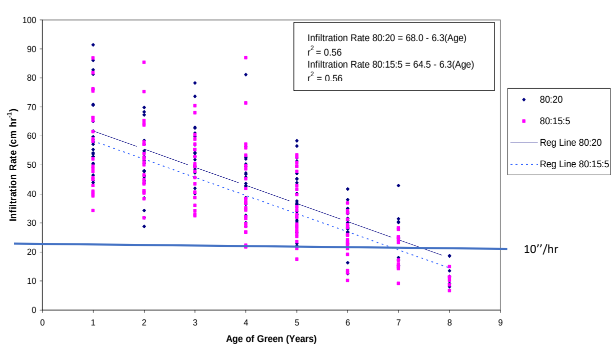

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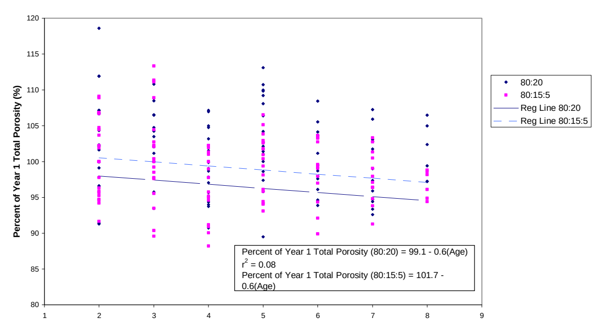

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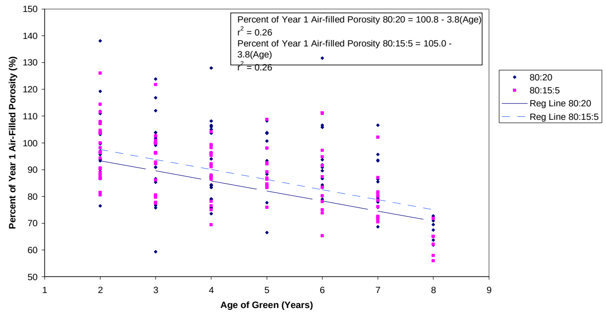

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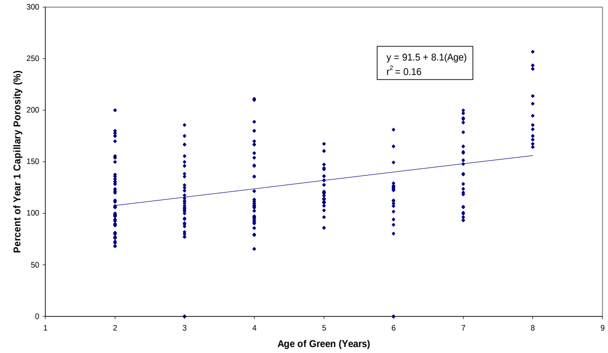
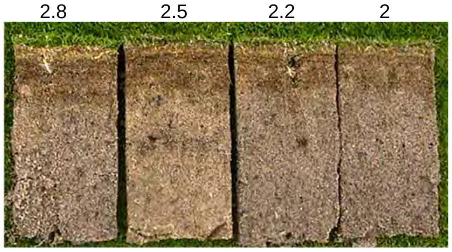


26

Mat development (cm)

2.8 2.5 2.2 2



8 7 6 5

27

Formation of Mat

- Formation of mat layer currently increasing approximately 0.65 cm annually (following establishment year).
- No visible layering, only a transition is evident between mat and original rootzone.
- Topdressing program
  - Light, Frequent
    - every 10-14 days (depending on growth) and combined with verticutting
  - Heavy, Infrequent
    - 2x annually (spring/fall) and combined with aerification

28

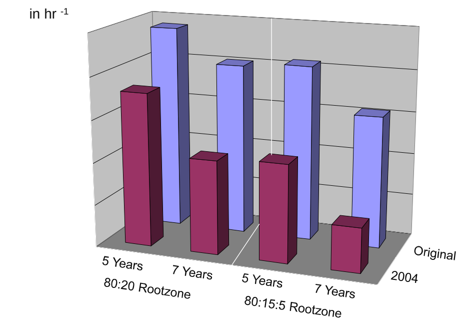
- 2004 USGA research committee site visit
- original rootzone
- mat development

29

Materials and Methods

- 2004 rootzone samples taken below mat layer from each soil treatment and sent to Hummel labs for Quality Control Test (24 total samples)
- Tested against original quality control test (z-score).

30



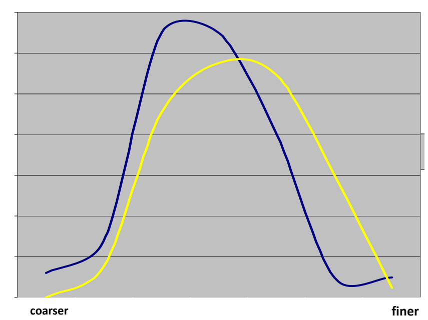
Comparison of preconstruction K_{sat} values to K_{sat} values taken 10/04.

31

Change in Rootzone Particle Size Distribution

- All rootzones tested in 2004 showed increased proportion of fine sand (0.15 – 0.25 mm) with decreased proportion of gravel (> 2.0 mm) and very coarse sand (2.0 – 1.0 mm).

32



USGA sand size compared to sand used in topdressing program for USGA plots at Mead, NE.

33

Root Zone: Mat vs. Original
(samples taken July 15, 2004)

- pH:
  - <u>Mat < Original</u> for all USGA and California Greens.
- CEC, OM, and all Nutrients tested:
  - <u>Mat > Original</u> for all USGA and California Greens.

34

Conclusions

- Based on *in situ* green testing K_{SAT} decreased over time due to organic matter accumulation above the original rootzone increased fine sand content originating from topdressing sand
- Original rootzone K_{SAT} decreased over time due to increased fine sand content originating from topdressing sand
- Organic matter did result in positive agronomic change

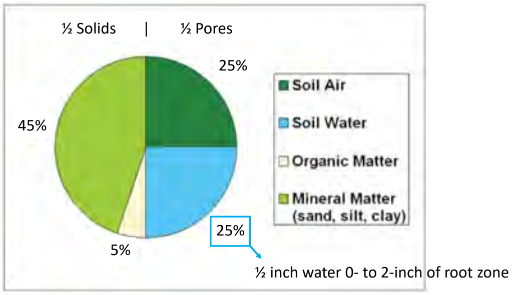
35

Want to know more?

- **Gaussoin, R., R. Shearman, L. Wit, T. McClellan, and J. Lewis. 2007. Soil physical and chemical characteristics of aging golf greens. *Golf Course Manage.* 75(1):p. 161-165.**

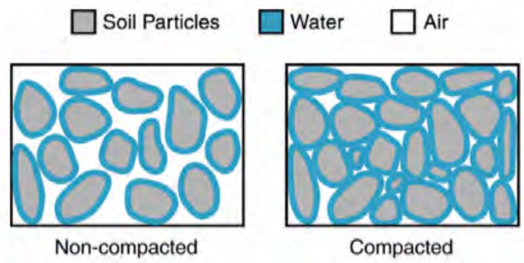
36

Idealized Proportions of Solids and Pores in Soil



Source: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_052836.pdf

37



38

Sand – particle size

Size
- Medium (0.5 – 0.25 mm) sand has very rapid drainage

- Very Fine Sand, Silt and Clay
  - increase water retention and stability of sand
  - but slow water flow (drainage)
  - Maximum 10% fines, less is usually preferable if drainage is critical

39

Particle Size Distribution for Drainage (USGA)

Particle Name	Diameter (mm)	Recommendation (by weight)
Fine Gravel	2 – 3.4	Not more than 10% total, maximum of 3% fine gravel
Very Coarse Sand	1 – 2	
Coarse Sand	0.5 – 1	Minimum of 60%
Medium Sand	0.25 – 0.5	
Fine Sand	0.15 – 0.25	Not more than 20%
Very Fine Sand	0.05 – 0.15	Not more than 5%
Silt	0.002 – 0.05	Not more than 5%
Clay	< 0.002	Not more than 3%
Total Fines	very fine sand + silt + clay	Less than or equal to 10%

40

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41

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42

10 Years of Research on Putting Green Root Zones at Rutgers University

T.J. Lawson, H. Samaranayake, J.A. Honig
B. Wolverton, B. Cashel, J. Devaney,
D. Gimenez, S.L. Murphy, M. Koch,
and numerous other undergraduate
and short course students

43

Acknowledgements

United States Golf Association
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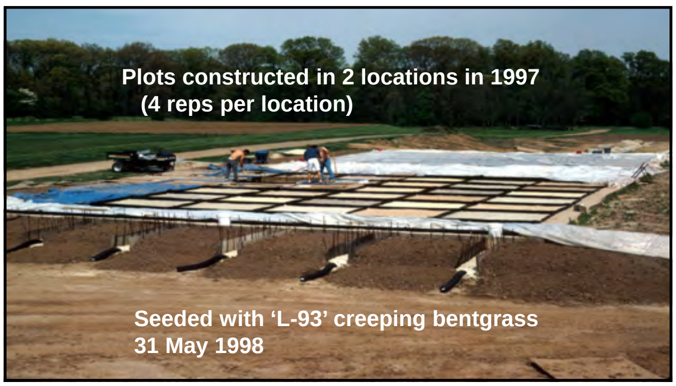
New Jersey Turfgrass Foundation
Golf Course Superintendents Association of NJ
U.S. Silica (formerly Unimin, formerly Morie Sand)
Dawson Corporation
AT Sales
Koonz Sprinkler
New Jersey State Golf Association
Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science

44



45

Open Location

46

Enclosed Location

47

48

Topdressed with Construction Mix

49

Mircoenvironment effect on annual mean turf quality averaged over root zone amendment treatments.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	9 = best, 5 = least acceptable turf quality						
Open	6.9	6.7	7.6	6.0	6.6	7.5	7.6
Enclosed	6.7	6.9	7.0	5.3	5.5	6.7	6.2
F test	*	NS	***	***	**	***	***

- As expected, turf quality poorest in the enclosed microenvironment (ME).
- More importantly, relative differences among treatment was similar across MEs; no evidence to justify building differently based on ME.

50

Root Zone Properties

Before 2004

USGA K_{sat} guidelines

Normal: 6-12 inches per hour

Accelerated: 12-24 inches per hour

Account for substantial climatic differences

Normal: temperate to dry climates

Accelerated: high rain subtropical and tropical climates or regions with frequent dust storms

51

Sand size distributions of five root zones.

Root Zone Mixes	Very Coarse	Coarse	Medium	Fine	Very Fine
	%				
Coarse	6	61	32	1	0
Coarse-medium	5	48	38	7	1
Medium	6	26	49	17	2
Medium-fine-1	4	11	53	26	6
Medium-fine-2	0	7	56	30	7
USGA rec	*≤ 10*	*≥ 60*		*≤ 20*	*≤ 5*

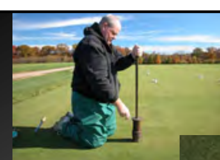
All sands mixed with sphagnum peat at 10% by volume

52

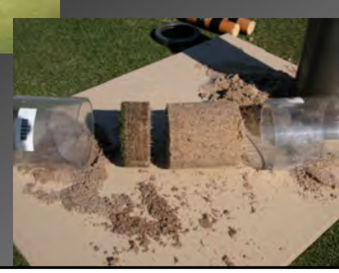
Pre-construction Properties of Root Zone Materials

Root Zone Sand	K_{sat}	Air-filled Porosity	Capillary Porosity
	in / hr	%	
Coarse	37	35	7
Coarse-Medium	30	27	13
Medium	25	20	20
Medium-Fine-1	16	17	25
Medium-Fine-2	24	14	29
$LSD_{0.05}$	3	1.6	1.2

53



Intact Core Sampling



Physical Property Tests

54

K_{sat} of Root Zone Mixes

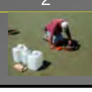
Root Zone Sand	Pre-Construction	1999	2001	2004
	inches per hour			
Coarse	37	32	56	96
Coarse-Medium	30	32	43	48
Medium	25	27	31	35
Medium-Fine-1	16	24	22	22
Medium-Fine-2	24	24	22	24
$LSD_{0.05}$	3	4	4	6

55

56

K_{sat} and Field Water Infiltration in 2004

Root Zone Sand	Field Core K_{sat}	Field Infiltration
	inches per hour	
Coarse	96	7
Coarse-Medium	48	5
Medium	35	4
Medium-Fine-1	22	2
Medium-Fine-2	24	2
$LSD_{0.05}$	6	2

57

Plot Specific Irrigation

58

Plot Specific Irrigation

59

Total Hand Water from May to October 2001

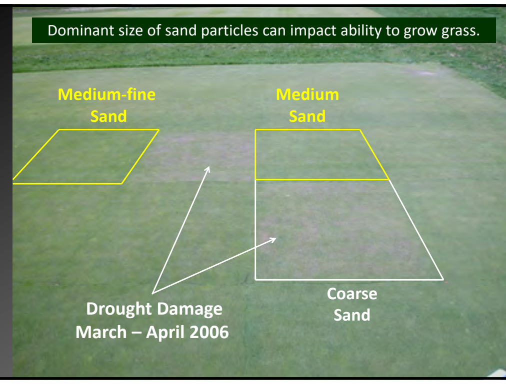
Root Zone Sand	Hand Water	Air-filled Porosity	Capillary Porosity
	inches	----- %	------
Coarse	8.8	34.5	7.3
Coarse-Medium	7.4	26.8	13.3
Medium	5.4	19.5	20.4
Medium-Fine-1	3.1	17.1	25.0
Medium-Fine-2	3.4	14.2	28.5
$LSD_{0.05}$	1.6	1.6	1.2

60

Total Hand Water from May to October 2001

Root Zone Sand	Hand Water	Turf Quality 1999	Turf Quality 2000
	inches	9 = best	
Coarse	8.8	5.7	5.6
Coarse-Medium	7.4	6.7	6.8
Medium	5.4	7.0	7.0
Medium-Fine-1	3.1	7.9	8.0
Medium-Fine-2	3.4	7.8	7.5
$LSD_{0.05}$	1.6	0.4	0.4

61



62

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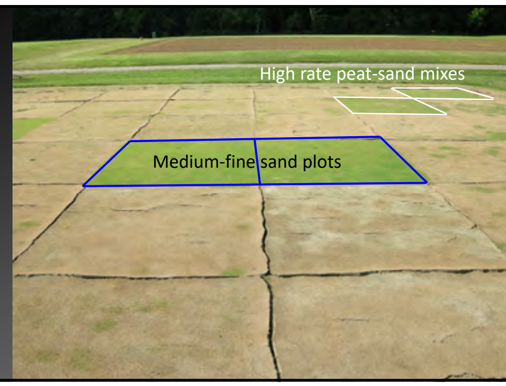

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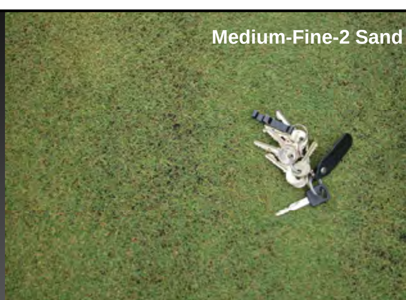


Algae forms when plots are not allowed to dry sufficiently between irrigations (i.e., plot specific irrigation discontinued)

65

Amendments for Sand

- Materials vary based on individual preference/bias
- Peat successful for many decades
- Numerous replacements for peat proposed and used
  - Native soil
  - Composts
  - Inorganic materials

66

Amendment Treatments (rate - % by volume)

Sand

Soil 2.5, 5 and 20%
Soil 5% subgrade
Soil 100%

Sphagnum 5, 10 and 20%
Reed Sedge 5 and 10%
Irish peat 10 and 20%

Fertl-soil compost 5%
AllGro compost 10%
AT Sales sand + AllGro compost 20%

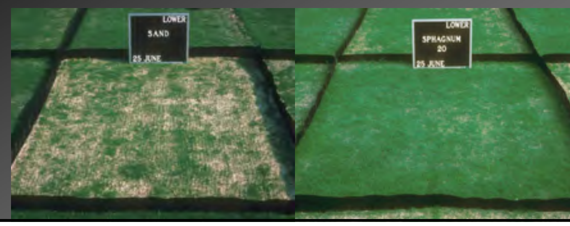
Axis 10%
Greenschoice 10%
Isolite 10%
Profile 10 and 20%
ZeoPro 10%
ZeoPro 10% surface 4”
ZeoPro + micros 10% surface 4”

Kaofin 10%

67

Straight Sand (un-amended) Root Zones

- OM remains very low (probably too low) over time
- Results in more frequent and intensive inputs to maintain proper plant nutrition and avoid drought stress.



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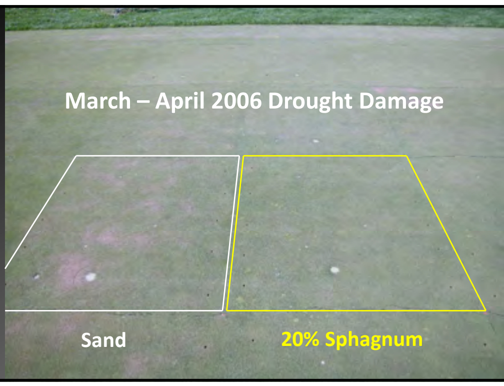
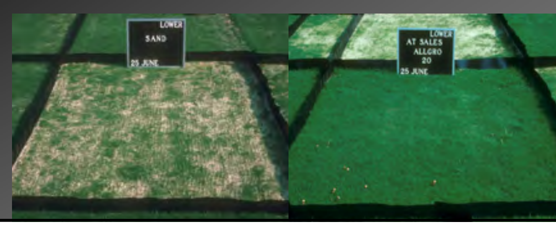


69

Compost

- Provided good to excellent turf performance (as good or better than peat)
- … but identification of a high quality compost can be difficult and is critical to success
- http://www.compostingcouncil.org/programs/



70

Inorganic amendments

Internally porous granules
- ✓ ceramics (kiln-fired clays)
- ✓ natural minerals (zeolite, diatomaceous earth)

71

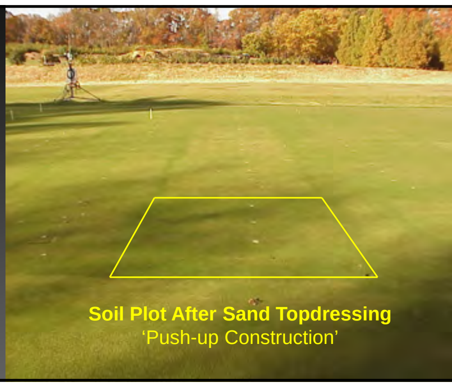
Inorganic Amendments

- Greater nutrient retention than 100% sand
- Greater water availability but not a dramatic improvement in carrying capacity (days between irrigations)
- Subtle improvement in turf quality
- Cost of these materials is significant, cost-benefit?

72

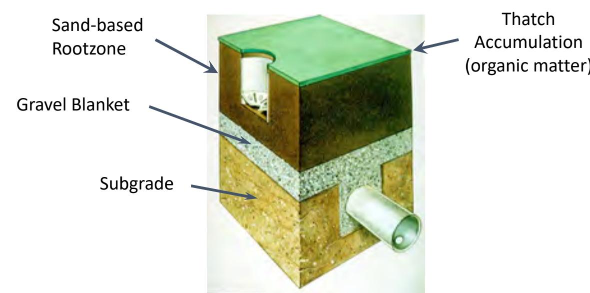
73

74



75

USGA Sand-based Rootzone



76

Straight Sand (un-ameneded) Root Zones

Popular with some architects, builders and superintendents.

- Ease of construction
- Initial cost savings - no blending and less testing
- Reputed to be useful in managing the accumulation of organic matter

77

Straight Sand (un-ameneded) Root Zones

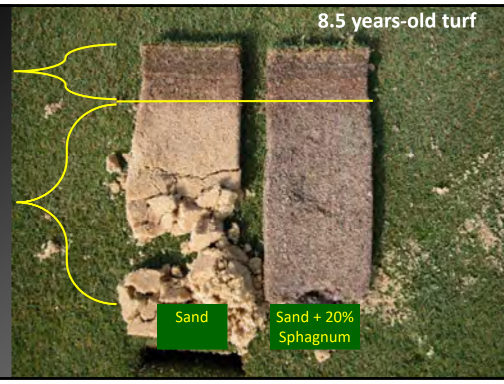
Advocates suggest organic matter (OM) accumulation will "amend" the sand over time

i.e., do not need to amend the sand it will happen anyway.

78

Mat Layer versus Root Zone Physical Properties

79



80

Sand

Layer	OM
	%
Mat	4.5
Root Zone	0.3

20% Sphagnum

Layer	OM
	%
Mat	5.4
Root Zone	0.7

81

Sand

Layer	K_{sat}
	in/hr
Mat	8
Root Zone	26

20% Sphagnum

Layer	K_{sat}
	in/hr
Mat	11
Root Zone	23

82

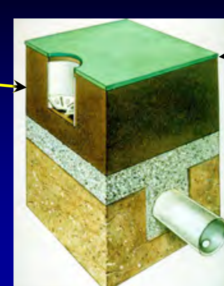
Profile	Total Porosity	Air-filled Porosity	Capillary Porosity
	--------------- % (by volume) ---------------		
Mat Layer	51	11	40
Rootzone	40	20	20

2" deep mat layer stores 0.8" of water

2" deep root zone stores 0.4" of water

83

USGA Sand-based Rootzone



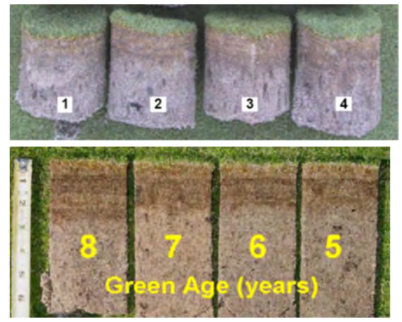
84

Research Need (2004)

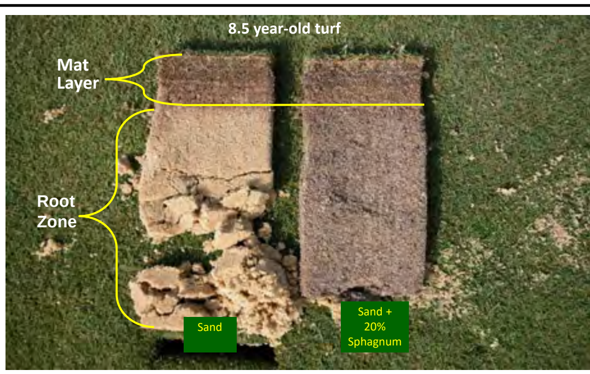
- Comprehensive evaluation of sand quantity, particle size, sampling protocol and cultivation methods

85

OM accumulates as sand greens age



86



87

88

89

Organic Matter Management Study

Objectives

1. Determine if conventional hollow tine is more effective than solid tine aerification at managing organic matter accumulation
2. Determine if venting methods are effective at managing OM accumulation

90

Treatments

Tine Treatment	Venting Treatment
None	None
2X Hollow tine	PlanetAir
2x Solid tine	Hydroject
	Bayonet tine
	Needle tine

91

Treatments

Tine Treatment	Venting Treatment
None	None
2X Hollow tine	PlanetAir
2x Solid tine	Hydroject
	Bayonet tine
	Needle tine

15 Trts per Rep
6 Reps per year
2 different years
= A whole lot of fun for one graduate student or 180 trts

92

All treatments received the same topdressing quantity (22 ft^3/M*) but different frequency

Equilibrated to identify differences of the practices in question

***1 ft^3 = 100 lbs of dry sand; yd^3 = 2700 lbs**

93

Materials and Methods

- Green Age:
  - 12 years
  - 9 years
- Data collected:
  - OM% (pre-cultivation/monthly)
  - Single wall infiltration (monthly)

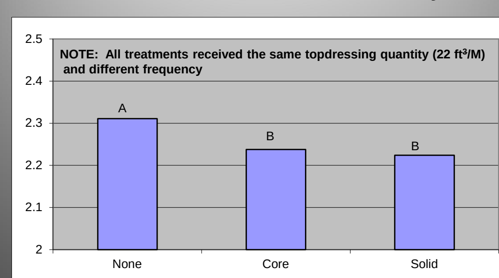
94

OM Data Analysis Year 1

- No differences between green age except for higher % in older green
- No differences among venting methods
- No interactions with solid/hollow/none

95

Effect of Tines on OM after 1 yr



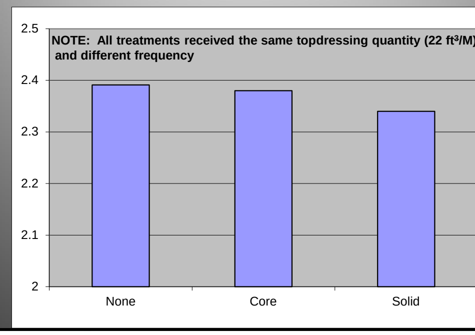
96

OM Data Analysis Year 2

- No differences between green age except for higher % in older green
- No differences among venting methods
- No interactions with solid/hollow/none
- No differences among solid/hollow/none

97

Effect of Tines on OM after 2 yrs



98

99

What these data do/don't suggest

- Cultivation, when topdressing quantity was equal, was insignificant as a means to control OM
- However, a superintendent must use whatever tools they have at their disposal to ensure sand is making it into the profile and not the mower buckets

100

*Topdressing interval relative to Tine/Venting combinations (22 cu ft/M)**

- NONE/NONE
  - 5-10 days
- Solid & Hollow/NONE
  - 7-14 days
- Solid & Hollow/Venting
  - 14-18 days

*Observed and calculated based on displacement and surface area opened

101


Cultivation Effects on Organic Matter Concentration and Infiltration Rates of Two Creeping Bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera* L.) Putting Greens

102

Project Objective

- National Survey
  - Determine cause and effect relationship among maintenance practices and their interactions relative to surface OM accumulation

103

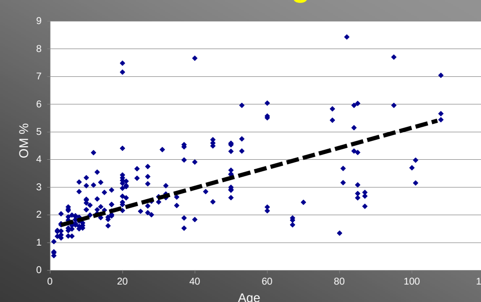
2006/07/08 Samples

- Sixteen states
  - Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, Colorado, Washington, Wisconsin, Illinois, New Jersey, Minnesota, New Mexico, Montana, Hawaii, California, Connecticut, Arkansas.
- 117 golf courses sampled
  - More than 1600 samples

104

105

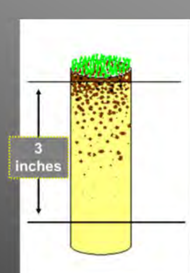
Green Age



106

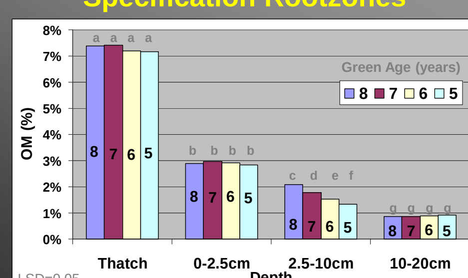
Is the age effect misleading?

- Sampling issue:
  - Mat depth increases as green ages resulting in more OM in the same volume soil.



107

Organic Matter in USGA Specification Rootzones

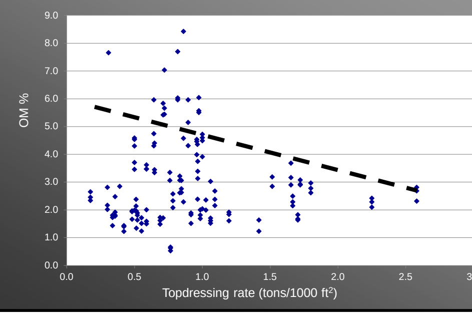


108

Mat Development with Age

109

Topdressing



110

Survey Summary

- None of the variables collected, by themselves, or in combination with others, ***predicted*** OM
- Courses using >18 cubic ft*/M of topdressing with or without "venting" had lower OM
- Of the ***known*** cultivars, no differences in OM were evident

****1 ft³ = 100 lbs of dry sand; yd³ = 2700 lbs***

111

112

Topdressing

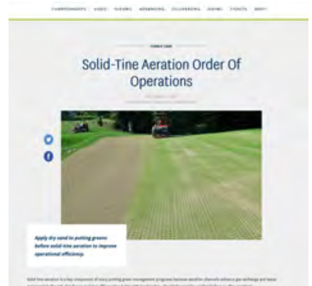
Old Tom Morris (1821–1908) is thought to have discovered the benefits of topdressing accidentally when he spilled a wheelbarrow of sand on a putting green and noted how the turf thrived shortly afterward (Hurdzan, 2004).

J.B. Beard is his classic textbook "Turfgrass Science & Culture, 1973 writes:

"The most important management practice for OM management is topdressing"

113

https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/course-care/regional-updates/central-region/2018/solid-tine-aeration-order-of-operations.html



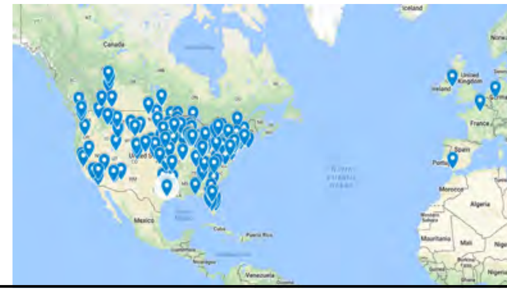
114

Please mark all that apply. In the last 5-10 years, on our greens, our facility has:

- Increased topdressing quantity
- Increased topdressing frequency
- Increased hollow tine (equal or greater than 0.5") aeration
- Increased solid tine (equal or greater than 0.5") aeration
- Decreased hollow (equal or greater than 0.5") tine aeration
- Decreased solid tine (equal or greater than 0.5") aeration
- Made minimal changes in topdressing application quantity/frequency.
- Made minimal changes in cultivation practices.
- Increased "venting" practices.

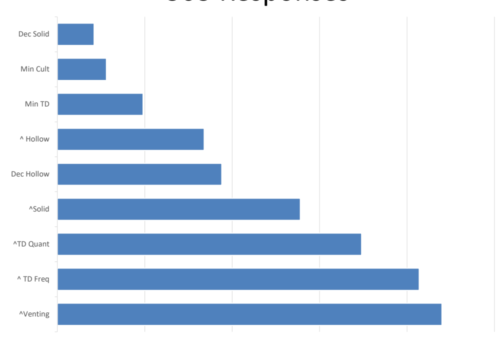
115

2016 Survey Respondents via Greenkeeper



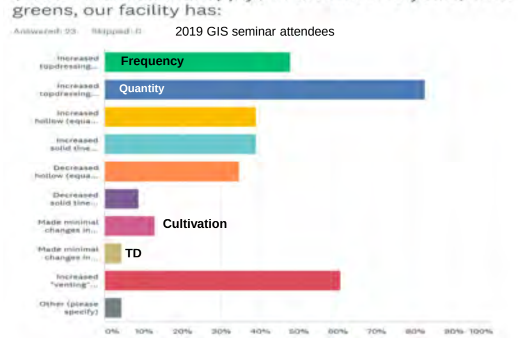
116

303 Responses



117

(Please mark all that apply.) In the last 5-10 years, on our greens, our facility has:



118

Acknowledgements

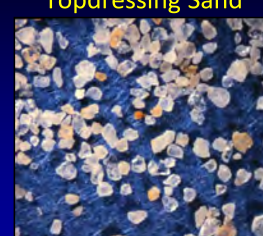
- USGA
- Environmental Institute for Golf
- Nebraska GCSA
- GCSA of South Dakota
- Peaks & Prairies GCSA
- Jacobsen, Toro, JRM & PlanetAir
- Nebraska Turfgrass Association

119

Keith Happ

Stanley Zontek

Particle Size of Topdressing Sand



120

Sand Particle Size (1-mm and 0.5-mm sands)

Particle Name	Diameter (mm)
Fine Gravel	2 – 3.4
Very Coarse Sand	1 – 2
Coarse Sand	0.5 – 1
Medium Sand	0.25 – 0.5
Fine Sand	0.15 – 0.25
Very Fine Sand	0.05 – 0.15
Silt	0.002 – 0.05
Clay	< 0.002


Photo: TJ Lawso

121

Research on…

- Topdressing
  - ✓ Sand Size
  - ✓ Rate
- Cultivation

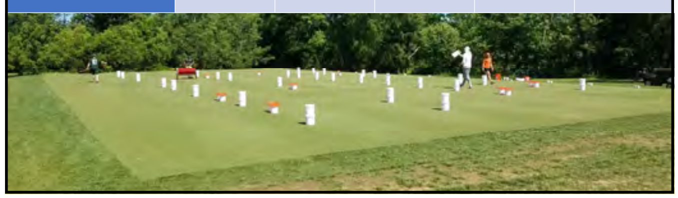
122

Research Objectives:

1. Effects of topdressing with sand lacking coarse particles
2. Does core cultivation and backfilling holes with medium-coarse sand offset any negative effects of topdressing with sands lacking coarse particles?

123

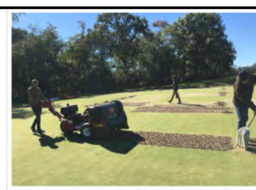
	2-1 mm	1-0.5 mm	0.5-0.25 mm	0.25-0.15 mm	0.15-0.05 mm
Sand Size	Very Coarse	Coarse	Medium	Fine	Very Fine
	----------------------- % (by weight) retained ----------------------				
Medium-coarse (1-mm)	0	30	60	10	< 1
Medium-fine (0.5-mm)	0	0	74	24	2
Fine-medium	0	4	27	48	21



124

Treatment No.	Sand Size	Topdressing Rate during Growing Season	Cultivation (twice/year; May & Oct) Hollow Tine	Backfill / Topdress	Annual Quantity of Sand Applied
	Factors in the Experiment				
		lbs. / 1,000-sq.-ft.		lbs. / 1,000-sq.-ft.	lbs. / 1,000-sq.-ft.
1	Medium-coarse	50	None	400	1,300
2	Medium-coarse	50	Core + Backfill	600	1,700
3	Medium-coarse	100	None	400	1,800
4	Medium-coarse	100	Core + Backfill	600	2,200
5	Medium-fine	50	None	400	1,300
6	Medium-fine	50	Core + Backfill	600	1,700
7	Medium-fine	100	None	400	1,800
8	Medium-fine	100	Core + Backfill	600	2,200
9	Fine-medium	50	None	400	1,300
10	Fine-medium	50	Core + Backfill	600	1,700
11	Fine-medium	100	None	400	1,800
12	Fine-medium	100	Core + Backfill	600	2,200
13	None	0	None	0	0
14	None	0	Core + Backfill	600	1,200

125



Cultivation Factor

- Cored twice per year (May and Oct)
- Holes backfilled with medium-coarse sand at 600 lbs/1,000 sq ft
- At coring, non-cored plots topdressed with respective sand size at 600 lbs/1,000 sq ft

126

Sand Picked-up with Mower Clippings

127

Sand Picked-up with Mowing One Day after Topdressing

Sampling Date	7-Jul		17-Aug	
Mowing Height	0.110 inch		0.110 inch	
	Sand Picked-up	Portion of Sand Applied	Sand Picked-up	Portion of Sand Applied
	lbs/M	%	lbs/M	%
Sand Size				
Medium-coarse	4.0	5.1	5.4	7.0
Medium-fine	1.9	2.4	3.2	4.0
Fine-medium	1.9	2.5	1.8	2.3
LSD (5%)	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6
Topdress Rate				
50 lbs/1000-ft^2	1.6	3.1	2.1	4.1
100 lbs/1000-ft^2	3.6	3.6	4.8	4.8
LSD (5%)	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5

128

Double-ring Infiltration Test (August 2019)

- Measured 3 consecutive infiltration tests of 1-inch of water per double-ring
- One double-ring per plot

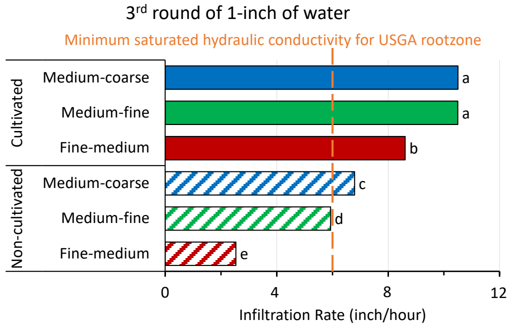
129

ANOVA of Water Infiltration Rate (August 2019)

	------- Infiltration Rate -------		
	1st round	2nd round	3rd round
Source of Variation			
Sand Size (SS)	***	***	***
Topdress Rate (TR)	ns	ns	ns
SS*TR	ns	ns	ns
Core Cultivation (CC)	***	***	***
SS*CC	ns	ns	*
TR*CC	ns	ns	ns
SS*TR*CC	ns	ns	ns

130

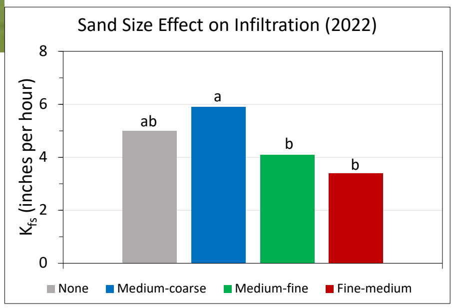
Sand Size x Core Cultivation Interaction
3rd round of 1-inch of water



131

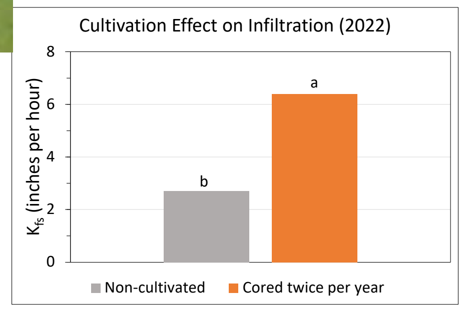
Field Saturated Hydraylic Conductivity, K_{fs} (2022)

132



Topdressing sands applied at 100-lb per 1,000 sq ft every 2 weeks during summer. Pooled over both levels of cultivation.

133



Pooled across all levels of topdressing sand size.

134

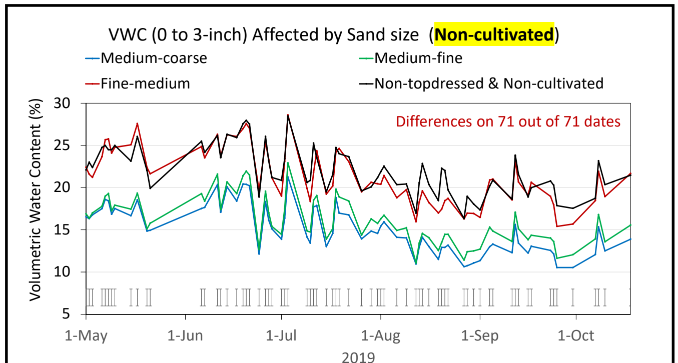
Water Content at 0- to 3-inch Depth Zone

- Measured on 71 dates during 2019
- Sand Size x Core Cultivation Interaction

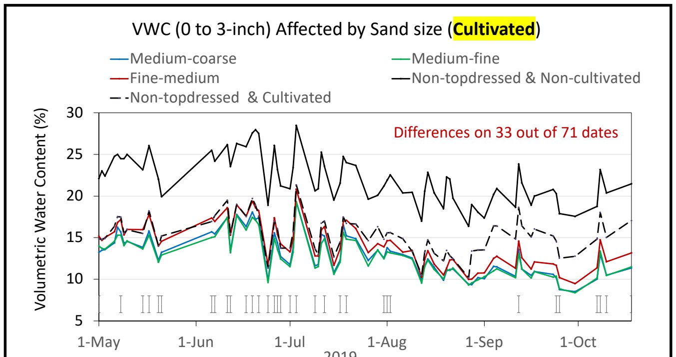
Source of Variation	Significant Dates (P < 0.05)
Sand Size (SS)	71
Topdress Rate (TR)	71
SS*TR	13
Core Cultivation (CC)	71
SS*CC	71
TR*CC	1
SS*TR*CC	0

Spectrum - FieldScout TDR350 Soil Moisture Meter
https://www.reinders.com/products/spectrum-fieldscout-tdr350-soil-moisture-meter-with-case/

135



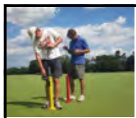
136



137

Surface Hardness

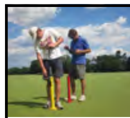
138



Surface hardness (Clegg) and VWC before cultivation in October 2022.

Interaction		Clegg, 0.5-kg	VWC, 0- to 3-inch
		G_{max}	%
Cultivation	Sand Size		
None	Medium-coarse	81.5 b	17.3 c
None	Medium-fine	80.8 bc	20.0 b
None	Fine-medium	77.8 c	26.5 a
Twice a Year	Medium-coarse	91.6 a	11.5 d
Twice a Year	Medium-fine	92.5 a	11.7 d
Twice a Year	Fine-medium	92.2 a	12.6 d

139



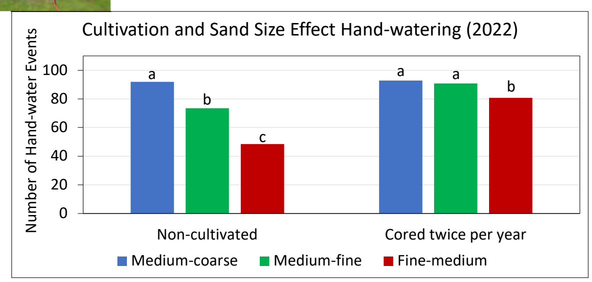
Surface hardness (Clegg) and VWC before cultivation in October 2022.

Interaction		Clegg, 0.5-kg	VWC, 0- to 3-inch
		G_{max}	%
Cultivation	Topdress Rate		
None	50-lb	78.8 c	23.0 a
None	100-lb	81.2 b	19.5 b
Twice a Year	50-lb	92.9 a	12.0 c
Twice a Year	100-lb	91.3 a	11.8 c

140

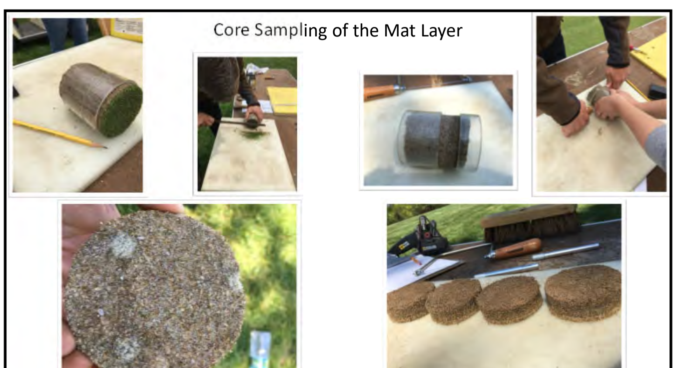
Hand-watering Individual Plots (2022)

141



142

Core Sampling of the Mat Layer



143

Mat Layer Depth and OM Concentration

	-----Depth (mm) -----		-------- OM (%) --------	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
Orthogonal Contrasts				
Non-Cultivated:				
Pooled Topdressed vs.	17.2 a	20.4 a	6.7 b	5.9 b
Non-topdressed Control	15.9 b	16.2 b	8.5 a	8.6 a
Core Cultivated:				
Pooled Topdressed vs.	16.9 a	19.3 a	5.7 b	4.6 b
Non-topdressed Control	15.0 b	15.9 b	6.8 a	6.1 a
Source of Variation				
Topdressing Rate	***	***	***	***
Core Cultivation	ns	*	***	***
Main Effect				
Topdressing Rate				
0.244 kg/m^2	16.5 b	18.8 b	6.5 a	5.6 a
0.488 kg/m^2	17.7 a	20.9 a	6.0 b	5.0 b
Core Cultivation				
None	17.2	20.4 a	6.7 a	5.9 a
Twice a Year	16.9	19.3 b	5.7 b	4.6 b

Mat layer depth was 6.3-mm and OM concentration was 6.7% at the initiation of treatments in 2016

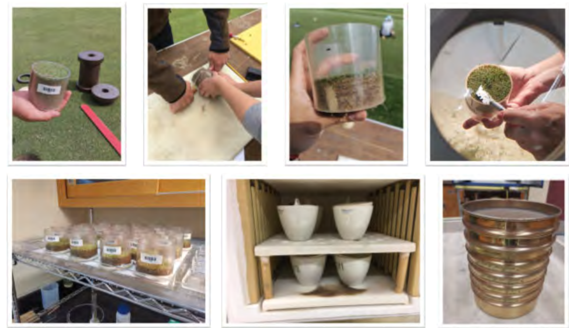
144

Mat Layer Total OM Content

	-----OM (g/m²) ----- 2017	2018
Orthogonal Contrasts		
Non-Cultivated:		
Pooled Topdressed vs.	9.9 a	12.1 a
Non-topdressed Control	8.6 b	9.2 b
Core Cultivated:		
Pooled Topdressed vs.	8.6 a	9.6 a
Non-topdressed Control	7.9 b	8.3 b
Source of Variation		
Topdressing Rate	**	*
Core Cultivation	***	*
Main Effect		
Topdressing Rate		
0.244 kg/m²	9.0 b	10.5 b
0.488 kg/m²	9.4 a	11.2 a
Core Cultivation		
None	9.9 a	12.1 a
Twice a Year	8.6 b	9.6 b

145

Mat-layer Physical Properties



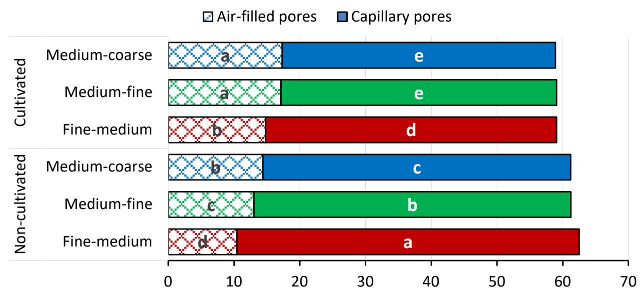
146

ANOVA of Mat-layer Physical Properties

	---Pore Size Distribution----			------Sand Particle Size Fraction------			
Source of Variation	Total	Air-filled	Capillary	Very Coarse	Coarse + Medium	Fine	Very Fine
Sand Size (SS)	*	***	***	ns	***	***	***
Topdress Rate (TR)	***	ns	***	**	ns	ns	ns
SS*TR	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Core Cultivation (CC)	***	***	***	**	***	***	***
SS*CC	ns	*	*	*	***	***	***
TR*CC	*	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
SS*TR*CC	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns

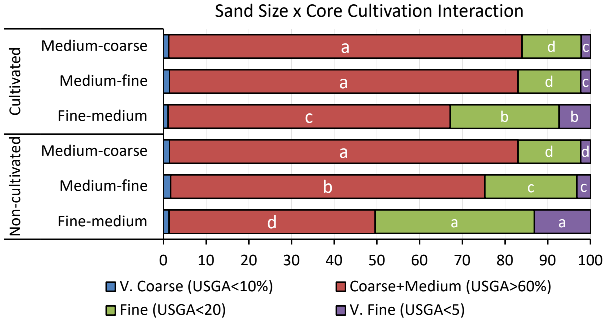
147

Pore Size Distribution as Affected by Sand Size x Core Cultivation Interaction

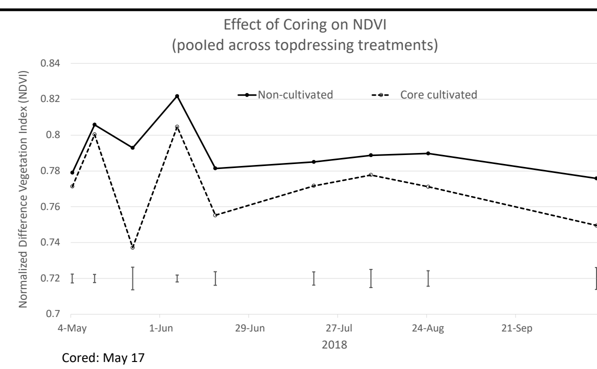


148

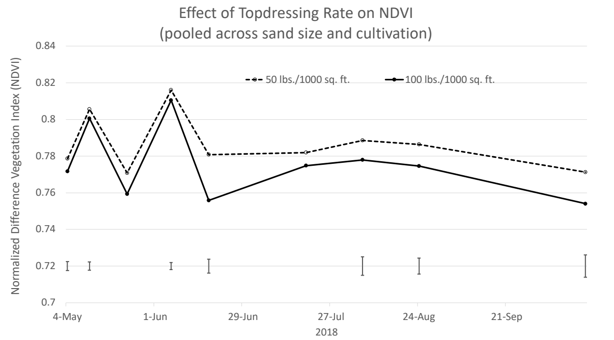
Sand Particle Size Fraction as Affected by Sand Size x Core Cultivation Interaction



149



150



Cored: May 17

151

Conclusions

Strong impact of core cultivation plus backfilling with medium-coarse sand:

- reduced capillary porosity and OM
- increased air-filled porosity
- consistently drier playing surface

Sand size effects depended on the core cultivation factor (interaction)

Medium-coarse and medium-fine sands

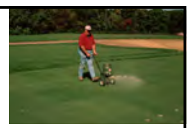
- similar at reducing surface wetness and OM
- finer sand distribution in mat layer under topdressing with medium-fine sand but core cultivation corrected (matched medium-coarse sand topdressing)

Fine-medium sand

- Much greater surface wetness and reduced infiltration due to substantial increase in fine particle size and capillary porosity under non-cultivated conditions
- Core cultivation and backfilling with medium-coarse sand reduced these effects on surface and infiltration; however, the quantity of fine and very fine particles in the mat layer remained above 30% by weight

152

Managing for Drier Mat Layer



Topdressing

- As much and as often as feasible (~1 ton / 1,000 sq ft / yr)
- Select as coarse a sand as feasible
  - 0.5-mm sand okay if dominated by medium sand, not fine and very fine
- Cost and interference with play and mowing are the factors limiting

Core Cultivation

- Very effective at producing a drier surface
- Time for healing is greatest limitation

153

Acknowledgments

USGA

Golf Course Superintendents Association New Jersey 1926

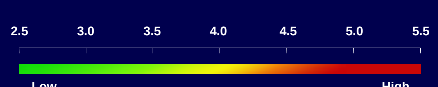
New Jersey Turfgrass Association

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

Center for Turfgrass Science

154

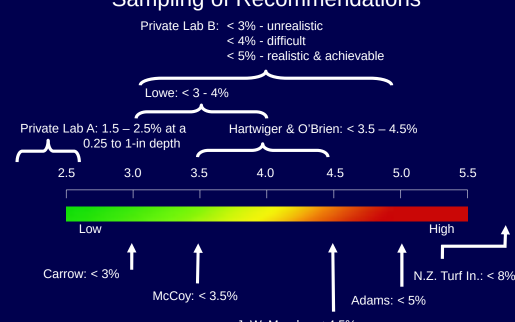
Organic Matter Recommendations



- Range
  - ✓ 1.5 – 2.5% between 0.25 to 1-inches
  - ✓ 8 – 15%
- Recommendations for almost every point in between

155

Sampling of Recommendations



156

Organic Matter Sampling Protocols

2.5 3.0 3.5 4.0 4.5 5.0 5.5

Low High

157

Developing a Standard for Measuring Organic Matter in Putting Green Soils

- Collaborators:
  Roch Gaussoin / Professor / Agronomy & Horticulture/University of Nebraska-Lincoln
  - Doug Linde / Professor / Plant Science / Delaware Valley University
  - James Murphy / Professor / Plant Biology / Rutgers University
  - Doug Soldat / Professor / Soil Science / University of Wisconsin-Madison
  - Travis J. Miller / Graduate Student / University of Wisconsin-Madison

Funded by

USGA **Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Management**

158

Objective is to develop an accurate and efficient

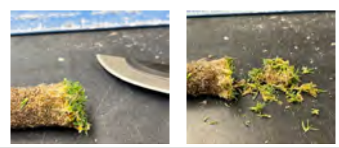
Questions that need to be answered:

1. How does sample preparation affect mean SOM?
2. How does core diameter affect mean SOM?
3. How many samples are required to adequately characterize the mean SOM on a single putting green?
4. How far apart should samples be taken?

159

Question 1: How does sample preparation affect mean

- Some researches leave verdure on, some remove, how does this impact mean SOM?
- Most labs grind and sieve samples, how does this impact the mean SOM when verdure is left on?
- Does increased core diameter size affect the mean SOM?



160

Site Characteristics

Samples were taken at the OJ Noer Turf Research Facility and University Ridge Golf Course in Verona, WI

50 samples were taken from five different root zones on a 10'X10' grid
3 from research plots
2 from putting greens

	Mean OM %
Putting Green 1	5.82
Putting Green 2	5.39
Research Green 2	5.23
Research Green 3	5.07
Research Green 1	4.74

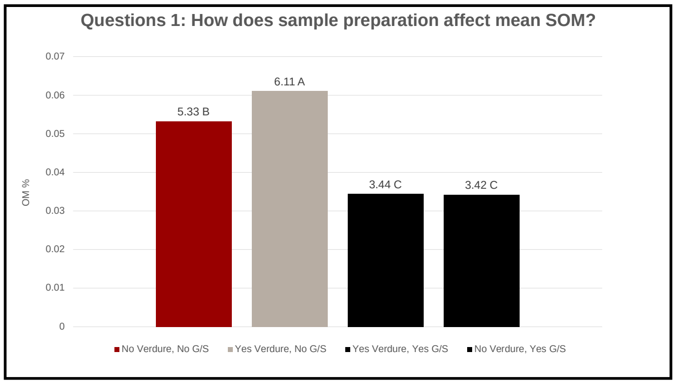
161

ods

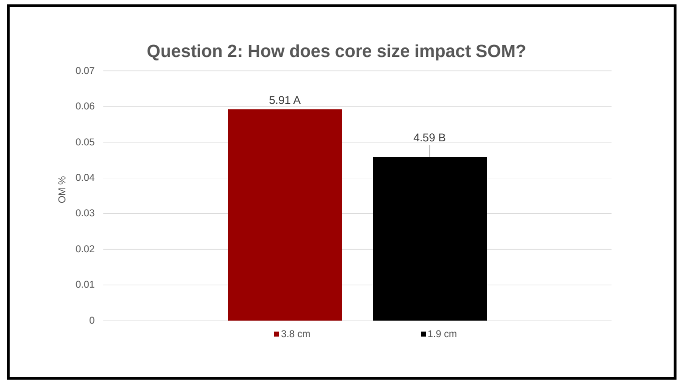
- Core diameter evaluation
  - 0.75 inch or 1.5 inch
- Verdure evaluation
  - removed above the thatch layer to remove all green material
  - left on
- Grinding/sieving evaluation
  - analyzed intact
  - ground with mortar and pestle and sieved with no. 10 sieve
- All samples were dried for 24 hr. at 105 C before weighing and burned and 360 C for 2 hours

Diameter (cm)	Verdure	Sieve
3.8	Yes	No
1.9	Yes	No
1.9	Yes	Yes
1.9	No	Yes
1.9	No	No

162



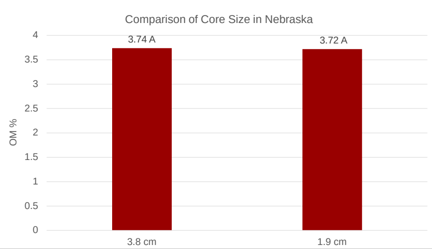
163



164

Core diameter difference not found in Nebraska

- Additional samples were taken on a Nebraska golf course on a 3*3m grid with both 1.5- and 0.75-inch cores



165

Question 3: How many samples do we need to take?

- What we did
  - Sampled greens with 0.75 inch cores, verdure on
  - Sampled on 10'X 10' grid from 5 greens on, 3 golf courses in WI, PA and NE
  - Analyzed with Chi-Squared distribution to determine how many samples are needed to reach p-value < 0.0001

166

With standard 0.75 inch probes most greens need only 5 samples to characterize the mean OM

Wisconsin		
Green	# Samples	Average OM
Chip	5	4.59
12	5	7.21
8	5	7.23
4	5	7.06
1	5	6.69

Pennsylvania		
Green	# Samples	Average OM
6	7	17.14
2	5	10.83
3	8	15.66
4	5	11.72
7	5	13.2

Nebraska		
Green	# Samples	Average OM
9	5	4.01
8	5	4.09
7	5	3.95
6	5	3.60
5	5	3.09

167

With the 1.5 inch probe need between 4-5 samples to achieve the same precision

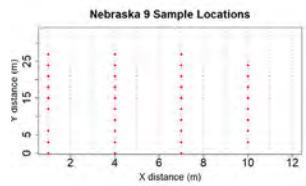
Nebraska Standard		
Green	# Samples	Average OM
9	5	4.01
8	5	4.09
7	5	3.95
6	5	3.60
5	5	3.09

Nebraska Large		
Green	# Samples	Average OM
9	4	3.96
8	5	4.09
7	5	3.90
6	4	3.62
5	4	3.20

168

Question 4: How far apart should samples be taken?

- What we did
  - Same sampling technique, 3*3m grids, 0.75 inch probe on 5 greens at 3 courses
  - Analyzed the data using spatial variograms to determine sampling distance



169

Initial findings for how to take samples

- Choose 5-10 random locations 25 -30 ft apart
- Use 0.75-inch diameter probe to a depth of 1 inch (larger cores acceptable but not necessary)
- Leave verdure on without grinding and sieving

170

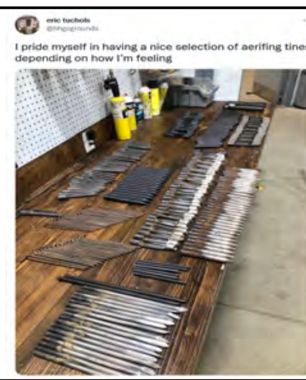
What these data do/don't suggest

- Cultivation, when topdressing quantity was equal, was insignificant in affecting OM
- Superintendents, however, must use ***whatever tools*** they have at their disposal to ensure sand is making it into the profile and not the mower buckets

171

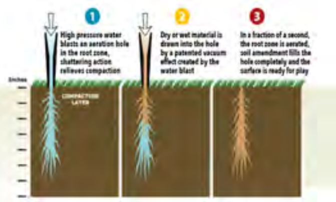
172

173



174

DryJect



175

176

Dryject Trial Fall 2021

- Check
- Hollow ½" ID
- Solid ½"OD
- DryJect 1 (3x3)
- Needle
- DryJect 2 (3x2)
- Needle + Solid
- Needle + Hollow

Procore - 3" target depth on all tines except Dryject = 5"

Sampled day after treatment in 1' depth increments to 4 "

177

Treatment	% OM	
Check	4.5	a
Hollow	3.7	b
Needle	3.1	c
DryJect (3x3)	2.7	d
Needle + Hollow	2.3	d
DryJect (3x2)	2.3	d
Needle + Solid	2.3	d
Solid	2.2	d

- No differences among depths
- Dilution only
- Dryject and needle tine were least surface disruptive
- Hollow tine response was unexpected
- ***Data is preliminary***

178

Spring 2023 Tine Trial

- 9 tine types
- 2 devices (ProCore and DryJect)
- Multiple treatments
- Surface and firmness using the USGA GS3 digital golf ball

Equipment and Tine Support Provided by TORO DryJect WET

179

Chapter 12 ASA Monograph (3RD Edition)

Characterization, Development, and Management of Organic Matter in Turfgrass Systems

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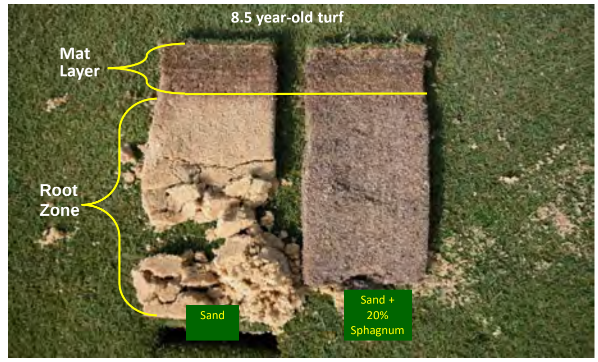
180

So what have we learned?

- A high-quality sand and a well-built root zone are relatively stable and will perform properly for many years.
- What changes over time is the surface…

181



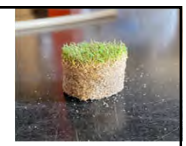
182

It matters how you manage the accumulating thatch/mat layer

- Cultivation can have a great impact. Don't ignore that practice. At minimum, use practices that help incorporate sand
- Topdressing is also important. Can use a 0.5-mm sand if that helps ensure enough sand will be applied during summer.

183

Sampling and Testing for Surface OM



- Sample 5-10 random locations 25- to 30-ft apart
- Use 0.75-inch diameter probe to a depth of 1-inch (larger diam. cores acceptable but not necessary) (can also sample other depth zones but keep separate from surface 1-inch)
- Handle and store carefully, avoid knocking sand from the sides of the samples
- Leave verdure on sample
- Ask lab to combust samples without grinding and sieving and include any loose sand in the sample container with the sample(s) being combusted.

184

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RUTGERS New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station CENTER FOR TURFGRASS SCIENCE

N IANR University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources Department of Agronomy & Horticulture

185