

Overseeding Bermudagrass Greens

by JAMES B. MONCRIEF
Southeast Manager, USGA Green Section

GOLF COURSES using bermudagrass have a choice of overseeding for winter play. Overseeding is necessary where cold weather causes bermudagrass to go dormant or grow too slow to maintain a satisfactory putting surface throughout the winter. A wide selection of seed mixtures is available that provide excellent results. Only quality seed should be considered. The information on the seed label includes the variety, purity, weed content and percent germination. The amount of pure live seed is important and can mean the difference between a good or poor stand.

Several factors affect an early superior playing quality. Bermudagrasses are very competitive with cool-season seedlings if the overseeding is accomplished too early, while warm temperatures persist. The date of seeding can vary greatly from south to north where bermuda is used and greens are overseeded for winter play. Earlier overseeding will be completed by September 15 and there will be a 15- to 20-day difference in seeding dates from north to south about every 150 to 250 miles. From the Atlantic to west Oklahoma and Texas, the following general seeding dates are suggested. If a golf course is overseeded more than nine months, the use of bentgrass should be considered. Using east to west Interstate Highways as guidelines —

I-40 and south
September 15 to October 1
I-20 and south
October 1 to October 15
I-10 and south
October 15 to November 15
I-4 and south
November 15 to January 1
or no overseeding

Many fungicides are available to protect seedlings while they are becoming established and to assure a good putting surface. Throughout the winter season, stay on a preventive program to keep disease from becoming a problem. There should be enough material on inventory at all times for at least two sprayings.



Bermudagrass putting green in process of being overseeded.

Ryegrasses emerge readily and produce a smooth putting surface within three to five weeks, depending on the management of the green. The first cutting of new selections of perennial ryegrasses should be at about 5/16 to 3/8 inch. This will allow better root development. Gradually lower the cut to minimize irregular roll of the ball. Perennial ryegrasses are more cold tolerant, more disease resistant and make a finer putting surface than domestic annual ryegrass; however, there can be a variability in the putting

quality of the perennial ryegrasses dependent on the grooming practices.

There can be two transitions: during overseeding and during the spring and early summer, when the cool-season grass begins to die. Poor transition in the spring or early summer distracts the golfer. No disturbance of the putting surface is desirable. Properly groomed bermuda greens can be overseeded with minor disturbance to the putting surface. During overseeding, however, the seed should be worked down close to the soil for best germination.

Soils of The Southwest

by DR. DOUGLAS T. HAWES
Mid-Continent Manager, USGA Green Section

TECHNICALLY, most soils in Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and much of southern California are aridsols, soils with surface layers low in organic matter and, in the natural state, dry most of the year. Most of these soils contain layers of clay and calcium carbonate or gypsum. Calcium carbonate is most common, and it often forms a hard layer known locally as

caliche, similar to what is called limestone on the East Coast. Calcium carbonates are common in all soil horizons, often existing as a coating on grains of sand. Because aridsols have not been leached, they are high in all nutrients except nitrogen. Unless the pH has been lowered, the availability of phosphorus may be low, and iron will be severely tied up.