

FACTS OF LAWN LIFE....

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Summer Synopsis

Ouch...a lot of areas around the province had very little rainfall in July, some areas had none. Once lawns hit that 4 week window of no rain, death begins to occur. In my travels out eastward beyond Peterborough, non irrigated turf did get a couple of decent rains in July, and once more precip came in August, the turf responded nicely. Even sports fields with no irrigation looked fantastic....but for other areas, not so lucky.

First, for any turf to recover, there has to be a ready source of fertility, already present. No amount of water will bring it back to spring-like quality without some food. Secondly, if the turf hasn't come back by now, it ain't going to. Yer better put some seed in the ground right away to make any meaningful stab at fixing it for this fall. Both of us are big believers in kelp, and yet again this summer, my thoughts were



Inside This Issue

Summer Synopsis and what we think will help
Bugs, Bugs and More Bugs
Nematodes: handling 3rd instar grubs

substantiated with results on sports fields. Fields I was monitoring were as good as any around, and I'm talking non irrigated, and the difference was a kelp treatment. The plants themselves are bigger, wider, and more aggressive.

Kelp is underrated-it's cheap and easy to apply, and worth its weight in 2011 gold prices. We call it.....**Green Tee.** But back to seed: there is no easier way to overseed and add compost than by using our Seed n Feed. Granular compost, with some added goodies, has an analysis of 5-2-1. Mixed in with it is either 10% or 18% Sports Turf seed blend. A bag does 4000 sq ft, and won't break the bank.

Aeration Methods: how do they stack up to each other?

I have been conducting trials with both slow release fertilizer and aeration methods on 2 school fields this season. Aeration methods analyzed included $\frac{3}{4}$ inch solid deep tine, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch solid deep tine, mechanical coring, passive coring, shatter tine and sports shatter tine, waterject, Vertiquake(the name says it all), and aeravator. The Vertiquake mechanically drives a foot long blade into the soil, disturbing little turf on top. The aeravator has a series of solid tines that reciprocate on an axis.

After a 3 week restoration period, I measured the compaction levels down to 4 inches, using a Spectrum Technologies penetrometer. Not surprising, the passive core aerator (pull type, ground driven) came up dead last, and the readings were no better than the control plots. At the other end of the scale, the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch solid tine deep tine and the Vertiquake provided the best compaction relief. The mechanical coring did not fair well at the 4 inch depth. Should any manufacturer ever build a solid tine unit that is

Weed control....

For those who are not happy with weeds this fall...

Even with the old conventional products, it would have been quite easy for customers to be complaining. Nothing like stressed, thinned or dead turf to bring on a lovely crop of weeds.

Richard has spent extra time and money with seeding and lawn inspections touching up weeds...the goal is maximize his retention rate and get his lawns as nice as possible for the finish of the year.

Lawn Exposure and Moisture Readings.....

When doing my school turf trials, I also took moisture readings, and was amazed in huge differences. Slightly sloped areas to the south, and I mean slightly, contained less than half the soil moisture than that of flat or northerly sloped turf.

Lawns on my side of the street that slope away from the sun are a gigantic leap better than across the street, that have a south facing slope. If you have a customer who is barking, you might want to mention that little tidbit.

"It's been a rough day. When I got up this morning, I put shirt on, and a button fell off. Then I picked up my briefcase, the handle fell off. I'm afraid to go to the bathroom"



Grubs making a comeback!!

We said they would be back, and they are. Many areas are now seeing newly hatched critters still, to 2nd instar, all in the same lawn.

Nematode sales were brisk this fall, and we are getting reports back of good control, particularly when timed with a rain proceeding the treatment. Lots of water is crucial after the treatment, and give the little critters the better part of 2 weeks to control...that is assuming that sufficient water is being applied.

For lawns that have grubs that have reached 3rd instar stage, *Steinernema Glaseri* species have been shown to do a relatively decent job. These are no ordinary nematodes—they are the Hulksters of the bunch. Three times larger in size, and weighing that much more, *Glaseri* are a much tougher nematode, and don't need the same coddling that HB need. Applying HB to 3rd instars isn't going to get you much, but the *Glaseri* will have the power to penetrate the bigger grub's skin. Because they are so much bigger and expensive to produce, they are more expensive, so you have to charge accordingly. Call me to get the pricing and rates on them.



Cranefly: The wet weather has really brought a resurgence of them back on to lawns...depending on your area of course. For options on managing the turf with those invading, call me or the office for more information.



Aeration cont'd

mechanically driving the tines in, we have a winner. We will be doing another set of trials in October, and the first year results are scheduled to be presented at the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium in Feb.

On the fertilizer side, we tried several kinds of slow release nutrients, along with organic. Along with the control plots, the 100% organic had the highest incidence of rust.

Need seed?

We have a good selection of perennial rye blends, along with a customer favourite, General Seed Mix. This certified blend contains a quick germinating Kentucky Blue, a low water use Kentucky Blue, Creeping Red Fescue, and 3 perennial rye's. At \$78 for a 50 lb bag, (plus taxes, freight, PDI, administration fee, air conditioning tax, tire tax, licence, and eco fees....kidding...just taxes and shipping depending on where you are) it is great value.....We also have other blends such as Sun Mix, and Sports Turf.

Spraying nematodes? Don't forget to inquire about **Soil Life with Yucca**. It improves efficacy by providing a more ideal environment for the little critters to thrive. Comes in 10L jugs, does 10 acres of nematode treatments.

Call or email for pricing.

If you have an opinion or topic of interest please let drop us a line. Please check our website for products, and remember that we are ready, willing and able to assist in any way possible.

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