

Overseeding Time and Seed Establishment Methods

By: Wayne Slaton, Golf Course Superintendent

In Central Texas the weather will always be a challenge when you need to spread your overseeding. You plan for the best week with no chances of rain in the forecast over 30% for the day of to the next 7 days if possible. Sometimes those early cool fronts can be tricky to forecast. At our golf course, our customers are very lucky we only close tee times for the morning of the day we overseed greens to allow our team to do a good thorough job. We target our overseeding of greens at a rate of 8lbs/1000 square feet with poa trivialis.

What do we do the day of overseeding greens you might ask? We prepare ahead of time ordering seed, sand, and prepare our mowers. We test our spreader rates and check that our settings are correct for the rate days before overseeding. We double-check our water hoses and train our new team members on how we overseed. The day we overseed our greens, we double mow, spread the seed and follow with a light top-dress of sand to see where we have been with the seed spreaders. We then hand hose water in the seed, and continue hand hose watering the seed the next few days. After a few days, we begin using automated sprinklers to help with establishment, being careful not to have irrigation water pool and run off the surface of the green. Pooling, and irrigation water that runs off the greens, could carry seedlings off our target area. This is why it is very important to keep a close eye on the sprinklers.

Hopefully with good weather and good irrigation management, within 7 to 10 days after application, we will see the 1st germination of poa triv on our greens. It is very important not to mow too soon on the new seedlings of poa triv so it will have a good chance to root properly. You will have slower green speeds while the overseed is being established. Once the new seedlings have rooted, we will mow the greens and see wonderful cool season limeish green with the mowing pattern stripes as shown in this photo from last season.



Our tees, collars and overseeding of select fairways will be different. We overseed the tee, collars and select fairways with perennial rye grass seed. Please don't make the mistake of overseeding your own yard with annual rye grass. Perennial rye grass seed is slower growing and has a darker color. We overseed our tees, and for the next week, we will leave the tee markers at the very front of the tee boxes to allow the perennial rye seed to germinate and root. Same as the greens, we will delay mowing the tees, collars, and select fairways until the seed is established.

During the time we overseed our fairways, it is very important to keep all cart traffic off of those areas. Cart traffic can damage the new seed and even keep it from establishment. This is why you will see our overseeded areas roped off from cart traffic. I would love to not use the ropes, yet not many on a public golf course have good cart etiquette and follow all the cart rules strictly. So, if you ever wonder why the carts beep and shut off, it might be that you have driven the cart in an area where you are not permitted due to cart traffic limitations. Please don't be that cart. Once we establish the fairway's overseed, we will start mowing and allow some cart traffic onto those areas on conditional terms that the overseeded fairway can take the cart traffic without damage. Maintaining the traffic on some of our overseeded fairways is very important for playability.

Hopefully this has been educational and will help you to better understand some of the practices we do to help keep our golf course in good fall to spring playing conditions. See you on our course soon. May all your shots find the fairway.

The article below from the USGA is informational if you want to learn more.

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/course-care/green-section-record/60/20/top-five-reasons-to-overseed-or-not-overseed-fairways.html>