


Spring GreenUp

By: Wayne Slaton, Golf Course Superintendent

As we look to warmer temperatures returning, our golf course turf begins to wake up from winter dormancy. We are preparing to do the best we can to help our golf course playing surfaces perform well. This is more than just irrigation, or “watering the grass”. Much planning goes into preparing our golf course for the spring to summer playing season. Winter pre-emergent control of unwanted plants, such as poa annua, begins to shift to preparing for spring and summer weed control. With this, timing is everything. Let’s book the date for That’s great to book a date, yet the Texas weather doesn’t care what your plans are. You will have to adapt and adjust with the weather to be successful. It is better to know the window of opportunity to have success. Just because you plan to aerate every year on March 5th, and apply pre-emergent the week after, doesn’t mean you will have the same results every year. You will need to pay attention to nature’s indicators. What are they you might ask? Well, let me share some WayneO wisdom I learned from my elders many years ago. Sorry, I am a native Texan, so no groundhog stuff. Pay attention to the Texas mesquite trees and bushes. They are usually the last ones to put out leaves, and a signal to me that we are out of the extreme cold season (maybe one more frost) Maybe it is just me, yet the color of the deer’s hide/fur will change from a darker tan to light tan along with finding antlers that male deer lose. Those are just a few of my indicators.

So, aeration is 1st in order, then pre-emergents, and fertilizers. Pre-emergents work by having a thin layer of chemistry on the surface to impede and prevent unwanted plants (weeds) from their first sprout. “Speak English WayneO” most of y’all would tell me. If you aerate after you have applied pre-emergent, you just poked a hole in your pre-emergent layer and that is not going to be very effective. Just so we all know what a weed is, let’s start with the definition of a weed:

 **Wikipedia**
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weed>

Weed

A weed is a plant considered undesirable in a particular situation, growing where it conflicts with human preferences, needs, or goals.



The word “pre” means before. We want to get down pre-emergent before germination of the “weed” you want to control. We need to make sure to apply the appropriate pre-emergent to control the right plants before they germinate. For you homeowners, just make sure to read the label and confirm whatever you apply will work for your type of lawn and the weeds you want to control. I have heard many sad stories about “I killed my lawn with the wrong application of weed & feed”. READ the label please, and follow instructions for proper application, both are very important. More is not better. The rate of application is critical for your success. On all chemistry used for turf grass management, the label is the law.

In March we prepare our golf course for the season and start with slicing of fairways & roughs. For this, we use pull behind equipment hooked to a tractor, and another that is pulled by a pro gator. See pictures below.





Other aeration types are solid tines and coring tines as shown below which we use on our greens, typically in June:



We also will be using the Air2G2 on our greens again this year to minimize golf disruption. We have had the Air2G2 since 2015 and it has been an important part of our cultural practices for keeping our greens alive and performing. For more information about the Air2G2, see YouTube link and picture below:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XeWhtBwsbg>

I hope this has been informative and educational. Looking forward to the great golf weather we will have soon and hope to see you on our golf course in the near future.