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OLD RIVERBED CONVERTED TO SPORTS COMPLEX



The alkaline riverbed soil was amended with 650 yards of organic compost. Sulfur-pelletized gypsum was applied before seeding with Kentucky bluegrass and fescue.

When Edward Murdock, park supervisor for Livermore, CA, heard land had been donated to the city for softball and soccer fields, he was thrilled—until he visited the site and discovered it was an old riverbed with hardly any topsoil, just silt and gravel.

Soil tests revealed the river bottom was a silty clay loam soil consisting of 14.8 percent sand, 46 percent silt and 39.2 percent clay. Deficient in almost every nutrient, the soil was practically devoid of organic matter. The pH was an alkaline 8.4, unsuitable for maintaining healthy turf.

Murdock knew he had a big job of soil amendment ahead of him to make the fields a reality. Two fast-pitch softball fields and three soccer fields were at stake.

Forty miles east of Oakland, Murdock thought the Oakland A's might have a few tips for him to follow. He discovered that Shelton Nursery Supply in San Jose supplied the team with a natural recycled compost called Compgro. The weed-free mixture of organic solids and fir bark chips is composted into a finely textured product by the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Murdock saw a number of solutions to his predicament in the product, since it was a source of organic material as well as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and zinc.

"The normal choice would have been mushroom compost," said Murdock, "but, I was worried about salinity and inconsistency often found with mushroom compost. The two things I liked best about Compgro were the fact that it is weed-free from composting and most of the nitrogen is insoluble and releases slowly."

At six cubic yards per 1,000 square feet, Murdock needed 650 yards to amend the soil for the fields. Before the compost was delivered, Murdock's crew installed an automatic irrigation system—a "must" in the hot, arid inland valley.

As the truck drivers dumped their loads

of compost, operators of front-loading tractors went to work spreading it over the site. Tractor-mounted tillers mixed the compost into the silty river bottom soil. After grading, sulfur-pelletized gypsum was spread over the seedbed to help leach out the salts and to lower the pH. The fields were seeded with a mixture of Kentucky bluegrass and fescue called Coliseum.

Livermore softball leagues will play their games this spring on two new diamonds and Murdock can devote his attention on the soccer fields.

BEMAN TO ACCEPT DONALD ROSS AWARD



The commissioner of the Professional Golf Association Tour, Deane Beman, has been named the 1986 recipient of the Donald Ross Award by the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Beman, who has served as commissioner since 1974, will be honored at the Ross Awards Banquet to be held at the Tournament Players Club in Ponte Vedra, FL, on March 10.

Beman was selected for raising the awareness level of golf course architects. ASGCA president John Watson notes that Be-