

PGRs Help Busy Sports Turf Managers

By Bob Hanvik and
Jimmy Johnson

Most sports turf managers aren't looking for things to add to their "to do" lists. However, some are penciling in, "Make plant growth regulator applications."

They are adding PGRs to their turf maintenance programs because these products can eliminate or speed up mowing, reduce clippings, free up labor for other duties, reduce the hassles associated with painted areas and improve the appearance of turf.

"I started using PGRs for the sake of convenience and to help me manage my turf areas better," says Bill Wolsfeld, grounds foreman at Wheaton

College in Wheaton, IL. "But last year with Primo® my turf looked so good that people were actually complimenting me for the appearance and asking what I'd done."

Wolsfeld manages 60 acres of turf, including 11 acres of athletic fields. All of these fields do double and triple duty and are in use nearly every day in spring, summer and fall, limiting when he can fertilize, irrigate and mow. Wolsfeld also faces the challenge of losing significant portions of his work force a couple of times a year.

"I applied the PGR for the first time last August 1 because I lose my summer help between the first and 15th of the month, and football starts August 15,"



Wheaton College in Wheaton, IL, reduced the need for mowing athletic fields by using growth regulators. Photo courtesy: Bill Wolsfeld.

says Wolsfeld. "My fall help doesn't start until a month later, so I need help managing my time."

Wolsfeld reduced his mowing to once a week during this period, and he was pleased with the results. "The turf looked great, and the staff we had weren't spending so much time on the mower."

PGRs also offer overseeding benefits. Wolsfeld overseeds twice a year in May and August to get a good turf stand before the fields get their heaviest use. He uses a 50-50 mix of Kentucky bluegrass and ryegrass. If he needs to overseed in season, he uses 100-percent ryegrass for quick germination. By applying a foliar-absorbed product like Primo, he could hold back existing

turf just enough to allow the seedlings to establish.

"Mid-April and early August are the ideal times for a PGR to work into my program," says Wolsfeld.

PGRs and Paint

Lanny Dixon, certified pest control operator for the school board of Broward County, FL, tried a PGR to minimize the problems she faced with her painted turf areas. "Normally our line-painting crews visit each field once a week, and even that's not often enough as we're mowing off paint within a couple of days," she says. "We'd often apply heavy coats of paint to keep the lines clean, but that leads to other problems like paint buildup in the soil."

In 1994 Dixon added Primo to her line paint for the first time. "We only tried it on half a football field, but the results were phenomenal," she says. "After one week the lines looked as good as they did the day they were painted, and after two weeks they still looked quite clean. We

found that the product worked for six weeks with minimal touch-ups."

Dixon notes several other benefits from adding a PGR to turf paint. She used less paint; with no need to apply heavy coats of paint, soil buildup was eliminated; her crews didn't have to lay string lines

every time they painted, and the painters were able to perform other functions instead of striping fields. "There were no negatives," she says.

Based on her experience, Dixon offers several suggestions for sports turf managers considering using Primo in line paint:

- Add water to the product before mixing it with the paint.
- Mix and measure the chemical carefully, and test it on a small area before applying it to an entire field.
- For multiuse fields (e.g., where soccer follows football) the PGR-paint combination must be used early in the football season so its effects will be gone by the time soccer starts. Also do not apply to soccer lines, as the growth of the grass will have slowed naturally by then.

PGRs can make a difference for sports turf managers, both for specific uses like line painting and for broad applications to reduce mowing and maximize the efficiency of crews. It's one of the few items from a to-do list that can eliminate others! □

Information for this article was provided by Ciba Turf & Ornamental Products, Greensboro, NC.



Grounds crews in Broward County, FL, mixed growth regulators with paint used for marking athletic fields. Photo courtesy: Lanny Dixon.

RainBuster

Polytarps



- **Black/White reversibles for the ULTIMATE A-L-L SEASON turf protection!**
- **Lightweight AND Economical!**
- **Sizes from Golf Greens to Soccer Fields.**

Compliments our complete line of vinyl covers, patented zipper systems, geotextiles, grids and more! Call for your **FREE BUYER'S GUIDE** now.

1-800-621-0146 TOLL FREE

M. PUTTERMAN & COMPANY, INC.
4834 South Oakley • Chicago, Illinois 60609
312-927-4120 (In Illinois)

Deep Drill Aeration



U.S. Pat. No. 4,476,938

FILL AERATOR HOLES COMPLETELY, THE FIRST TIME

- 0-8 inches deep using 24 Carbide Tip Bits – Spaced 7.5 centers.
- 1 inch Drill Size.
- 2500 to 3000 sq. ft. hour.
- Hoppers will hold total of 1.87 sq. yd. per fill.
- Medium – Dry Sand – Isolite – Profile, etc.

Floyd McKay Aerofier Co.

P.O. Box 191 • Dunn, NC 28335
(910) 892-7806 • (910) 892-4443 fax

Circle 110 on Postage Free Card