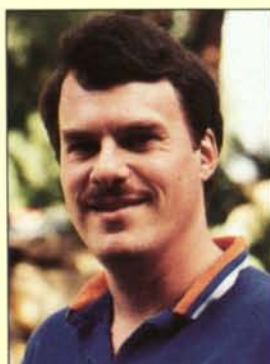


THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE



Going Underground to Prepare for Winter

Just as squirrels gather acorns for the winter, so too must sports turf managers prepare their fields for the coming of winter. Except for a few soccer fields in the South, most athletic fields in the U.S. are not in use

during the winter. Many sports turf managers have already completed their fall fertilization programs (which we looked at last month) and are currently in the process of preparing their facilities to face cold temperatures and difficult weather conditions.

Most sports turf managers do an excellent job of preparing their fields for the winter. Some of the most important preparation takes place underneath the turf. This month's issue of *sportsTURF* highlights some of the underground preparations that can make a big difference in the health of turf come springtime.

This month's issue includes a look at underground heating systems for athletic fields. While underground heating systems have been around for years (the Packers have had one in Green Bay since 1968), the concept has become more popular in recent years. New systems have been installed at Coors Field and Mile High Stadium in Denver, and the Chicago Bears are considering the possibility of installing a system at Soldier Field. What's more, underground heating systems are not just for cold-weather fields anymore. Arizona State University has a hot water system at Sun Devil Stadium that is used to extend the warm season for the bermudagrass — or, more precisely, to present the illusion of springtime conditions so that the bermuda does not go dormant until after football season is over.

A sports turf manager's plate is so full during the fall season that some things can easily be overlooked. One task that is sometimes overlooked — but shouldn't be — is winterizing irrigation systems, and this month's issue includes some suggestions for making sure the job gets done right. Whether an irrigation system is fully automated or manually controlled, proper winterization will ensure that your system is ready to go to work again in the spring.

Sports programs on the professional, college, high school and municipal level will be back in full swing again next spring, just as the turf on the athletic fields comes back to life. Sports turf managers want their turf to be ready when the players are ready. The best way to make sure athletic fields are ready for use in the spring is by looking under the field and making the necessary preparations for winter right now.

Mike Augsdorfer

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EVENTS

CALENDAR

November

5-8 Twenty-fifth Annual Conference and Show, sponsored by the National Institute on Parks and Grounds Management. Toledo, OH. Contact: National Institute, (414) 733-2301.

7-9 Penn State Golf Turf Conference, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council Inc. Nittany Lion Inn, University Park, PA. Contact: Dr. Peter Landschoot, (814) 863-1017 or PTC, (814) 863-3475.

7-10 Turf and Grounds Exposition, sponsored by the New York State Turf Association and Cornell University. Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester. Contact: (800) 873-TURF or (518) 783-1229.

12-16 PGMS 84th Annual Conference and Sixth Annual Green Industry Expo. Worthington Hotel, Ft. Worth/Tarrant County Convention Center, Ft. Worth, TX. Contact: PGMS, (800) 609-7467 or Eleanor Ellison, (770) 973-2019.

27-29 North Central Turfgrass Exposition, Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, IL. Contact: Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, (312) 201-0101.

December

5-8 Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Conference and Trade Show. Columbus, OH. Contact: (614) 261-6750.

6-8 Forty-second Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association. Currigan Hall, Denver, CO. Contact: (303) 688-3440.

Send announcements of your events two months in advance to: Editor, sportsTURF, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA 92234. Fax: (619) 770-4380.