Advice on mowing stripes and patterns

SPORTSTURF asked several prominent turf managers to answer questions on how they stripe their fields. Here are some of the responses:

Trevor Vance, Kansas City Royals

ST: In your opinion, what are the most important things to know about mowing designs on baseball fields?

Vance: The field is the backdrop of the game. You want it to look crisp, sharp, and professional. Don't take away from the game; the fans come to see the players, and after they say, "Wow!" when they first see the field, you don't want them talking about it any more. You want your field to be beautiful but not "loud."

Get comfortable with your mower first. Start simple; cutting a straight line isn't as easy as it looks. Maybe start by cutting 1/2 circles; then you can't tell if your lines are not straight. Don't repeatedly go over a line trying to get it straight though.

ST: How do you mow a straight line?

Vance: Find a point ahead and stay focused on it, then go for it. It's not easy, as I said. Hopefully your foul lines are

straight, so start there, cutting along the line first, then try and follow that straightness. If you mess up, you can fix it the next day.

ST: What equipment do you use to stripe?

Vance: We use a triplex 3-reel 2653 mower in the outfield and sometimes in the infield. We also use a walk-behind 26-inch greens mower, which stripes wider so you make fewer passes.

We vary our cuts, using a different pattern every homestand. What pattern is chosen depends on weather, time of year, and length of the homestand. A shorter one we might just have a center cut; longer, we crosscut different direction every day so we don't put a grain into the turf.

ST: Do you have to make adjustments in your maintenance schedule to mow designs? Time of day, height of cut, etc.?

Vance: In the heat of summer we cut lots of 1/2 circles so we don't have to be so exact.

Barney Lopas, Anaheim Angels

In his 9th year in Anaheim, Barney Lopas keeps it simple. "We cut a line from home plate directly to where each of our players stands, and we keep it that way throughout the entire homestand," he says of his infield mowing pattern.

"When the team's gone, we mow in different directions, but 5 or 6 days before they are back, we starting burning in the old pattern," Lopas says. Lopas doesn't always keep it simple though. His post-9/11 American flag was a masterpiece, as was the tribute "26" cut into the outfield to honor long-time Angels owner Gene Autry after he passed away. The number refers to Autry's status as the "26th man" on the roster, says Lopas.

For three seasons Lopas and crew mowed the outfield with walk-behinds but now have some nine-blade triplex mowers from Jacobsen for the outfield, as well

both Jake and Toro walk-behind models. He uses them all to create his stripes.

Lopas says if you're just starting to cut some lines into your field, use string lines to centerfield or a foul line, then mow three lines, mow them back again, before moving on to three more lines, and so on. "Pick a point on the fence and head straight for it. Once your lines are mowed in, it's a piece of cake from there," Lopas says. "Even I could do it!"



Collin Castille, Houston Astros

ST: In your opinion, what are the most important things to know about mowing designs on baseball fields?

Castille: Knowing what your grass is capable of doing is the most important. What will the grass look like when you put a particular pattern in? How many times do you have to mow in order to get

the grass looking the way you want it (or how long does it take to get an old pattern out).

ST: What equipment do you use to stripe?

Castille: We use mowers with rollers on them. Our walk behind, which we use for the infield, is a reel mower with a small roller in the front and a large drum in the back of the cutting unit. Our outfield unit has three reels on it, also has rollers in front and in back of the cutting unit. These rollers do very good jobs and produce what we are looking for.

ST: Do you have to make adjustments in your maintenance schedule to mow designs?

Castille: No, we are fortunate that we do not have to make any adjustments to our program in order to create a pattern on our field. Our grass stripes up nicely. The only drawback to our field is that we have to cut our grass pretty low. In order for us to get a pattern to look very good we have to mow it at least five times in order to make it look good. If we ever wanted to do something with high detail we would probably have to mow it more than five times.

ST: Any other advice for those who want to mow patterns on baseball fields?

Castille: Keep your patterns simple and clean. Don't have more than one pattern in at a time. **ST**

TOPDRESSER FOR PROGATORS

Specifically designed for the John Deere ProGator 2020 and 2030 utility vehicles, the TD100 Top Dresser is made of galvanized steel hopper that resists corrosion and is supported by a steel frame for strength. A fixed-speed nylon/polyester cord, endless conveyor belt moves material under the metering gate and through a rotating brush for even distribution. The conveyor belt and rotating brush are powered by a hydraulic motor that operates off the ProGator hydraulic system. John Deere/800-537-8233

For information, circle 062 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-062



LOW-PROFILE SPRAYER

The Smithco Spray Star offering a new Hydro Drive System that eliminates belt drive/3-speed mechanical system maintenance. The unit's turning radius allows maneuvering around the tightest areas, while the 7.1-psi footprint floats over delicate areas. Extremely precise controls for spray application rates plus hydraulic power steering and the choice of computerized or manual spray

control system. Smithco/877-833-7648 For information, circle 064 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-064

"TURF TENDER"

Dakota Peat & Equipment has introduced the 414 Turf Tender to its topdresser product line. Built at the request of customers, the 414 features a 4-yd. hopper and is designed to spread any type of material needed for turf maintenance. The 414 features an electrically controlled hydraulic system that allows you to control spinner speed and belt speed from the tractor seat for "on-the-go" spread pattern adjustments.

Dakota Peat & Equipment/800-477-8415 For information, circle 065 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-065

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is inside view of a typical TifSport plug shows TifSport's impressive root system, stolons and rhizomes.

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TOPDRESSER HYDRAULIC KIT OPTION

The Ty-Crop ProPass 180 low impact broadcast top-dresser now offers an optional self-contained engine powered hydraulic pump and reservoir. The unit can be towed behind many types of vehicles, regardless of their hydraulic capabilities, which means you can share the top-dresser without sharing the tow vehicle. Units feature light foot print, accurate spread pattern (so there's no need to drag or brush in afterwards), and gives you the versatility to spread a variety of materials at varying widths and depths.

Ty-Crop/800-845-7249
For information, circle 066 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-066

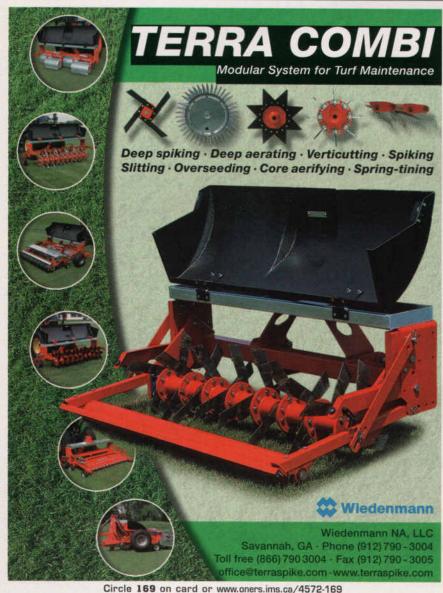


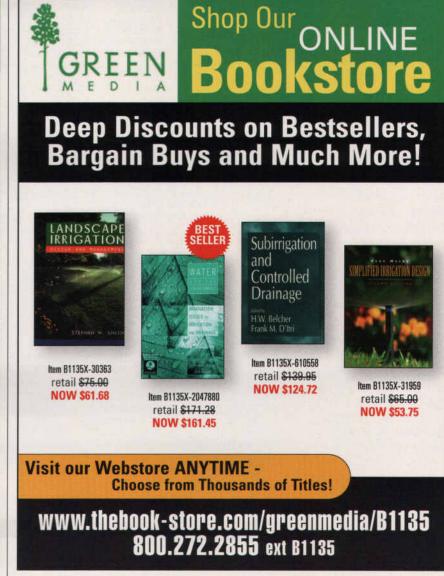
REDEXIM'S TOPDRESSER

Redexim Charterhouse introduces topdressers to its line of turf maintenance equipment. Most

models use hydraulics to power a permanently self-aligning conveyor belt, delivering the wet or dry material directly to the rotary brush, which can deliver a variety of materials, including sand and rubber infill mix, for a spread up to 1/2-in. thick in one pass. The Easy Spread model is a low cost solution that can be used with a variety of materials, spreading as much as 8 tons in one day using a single operator.

Redexim Charterhouse Inc/800-597-5664 For information, circle 067 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-067





SHIELDED SPRAYER

These 52- and 132-in. aerodynamically designed shielded sprayers deliver an even spray of small droplets that "stick" to vegetation achieving greater coverage with less chemicals. Independent floating chambers follow the ground contours for precise application. The spray attachment is for Grasshopper's full line of True ZeroTurn, FrontMount, and MidMount mowers. Grasshopper/620-345-8621

For information, circle 069 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-069



IMPROVED NEWRIDER MARKING MACHINE

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available. Newstripe, Inc/800-624-6706 For information, circle 071 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-071



"TURF SLICER"

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TORO CORE COLLECTOR

Toro has introduced the Pro Sweep 5200 core collector that features a 52-in. sweeping width with an exclusive floating brush housing that rotates from side to side and front to back, allowing the sweeper to collect cores on uneven terrain. The pivoting sub-frame allows you to maintain positive tongue weight and for better traction on inclines, even when the sweeper is filling up. In addition, the roller height is adjustable for specific turf applications.

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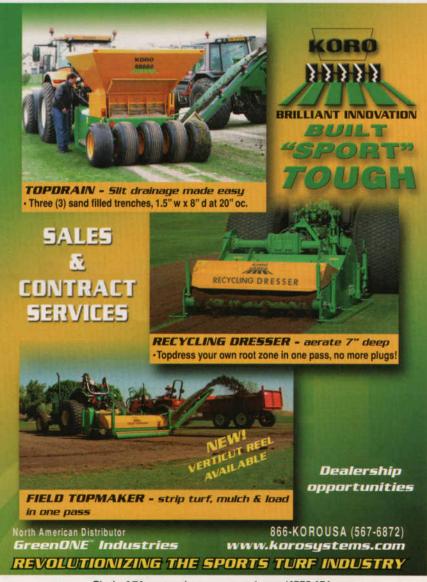


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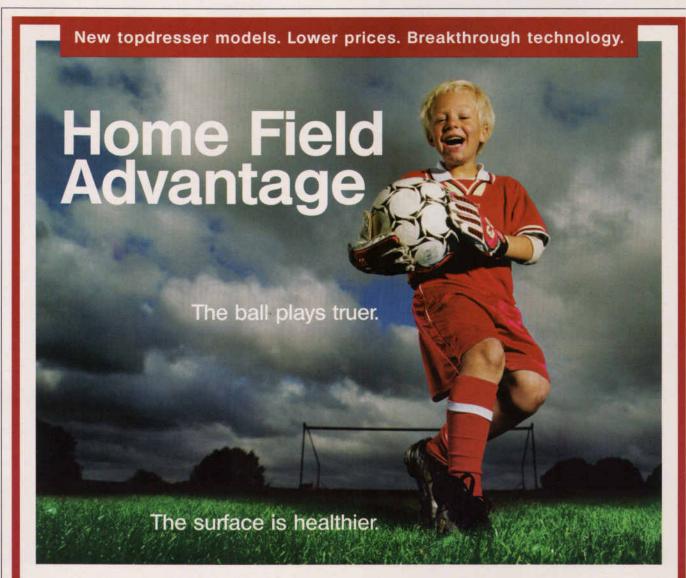
Redexim Charterhouse has unveiled a new ride on Verti-Drain 7007 with hydrostatic drive, powered by a 13-hp Briggs and Stratton Vanguard OHV engine, and uses a hydrostatic transmission supplied by Eaton, with a forward speed of over 6.5 mph. It has a three-wheel drive option available, and has a working capacity of over 12,000 sq. ft. per hour.

Redexim Charterhouse/800-597-5664 For information, circle 097 or see http://www.oners.ims.ca/4572-097



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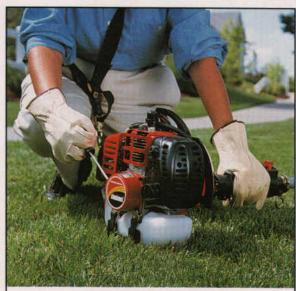


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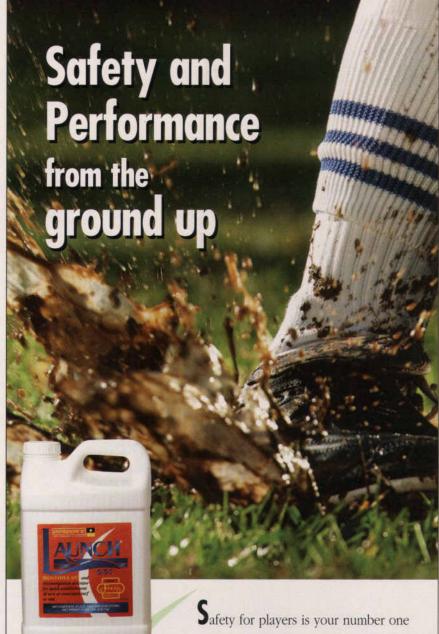
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