

On cultural practices

Mike Tentis, Ewing's National Product Manager for Turf Products & Erosion Control, had the following comments to offer regarding cultural practices:

In addition to the water-efficient technologies above, sports turf managers are also opting for slow-release fertilizers. Slowly-available fertilizers, which are typically coated with plastics, resins or sulphur, have lower salt indexes than other quickly-available nitrogen fertilizers. These "coated" nitrogen products do not need to be watered in as heavily as non-coated products.

Paying closer attention to cultural conditions will ultimately help the sports turf professional manage water resources more effectively.

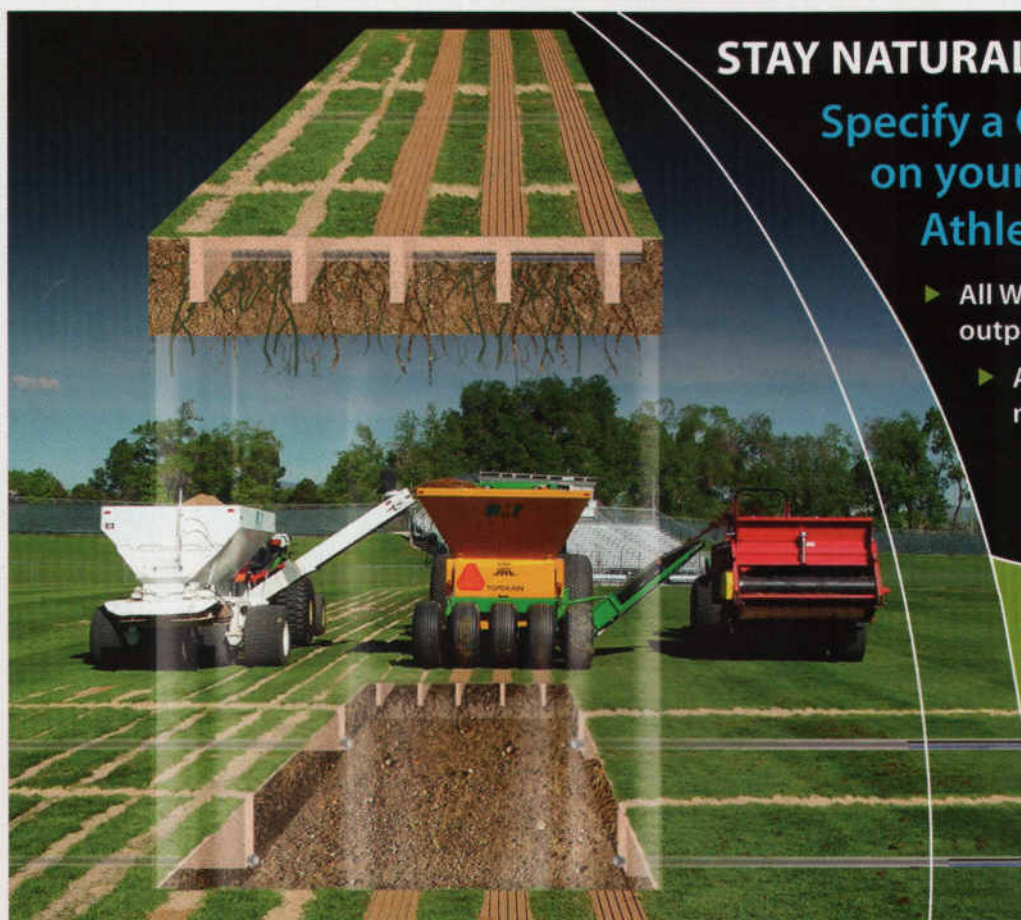
- A strong foundation of regular aeration and topdressing, with both porous calcined clay products and organic matter such as compost, will help make the medium that the roots are growing in more able to withstand the effects of drought.

- Heavily compacted soils cause rooting to diminish and thereby minimizes the roots' ability to access water deep in the soil profile.

- There is a fair amount of research that shows that turf cut higher—such as two inches from the soil layer instead of one inch—is better able to access water deeper in the soil profile, as the rooting depth is correlated to shoot height. This, however, pose a challenge on sports fields of course.

- Have a soil sample analyzed by a testing laboratory. The process is fairly inexpensive and will help the sports turf manager determine his or her site's balance of nutrients, which is an essential piece of information when making the appropriate selection and application of fertilizer.

- Adding mulch, pine straw or other amendments helps the soil hold water and nutrients, enabling plants to grow deep roots and resist disease.



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