

Overseeder helps biodiversity, cuts chemical applications

By Eric Schroder

In response to users who wanted a seeder that could follow contours and lessen play interruptions, Turfco Manufacturing introduced the TriWave machine several years ago. According to Scott Kinkead, the company's executive vice president, "Managers needing to increase the biodiversity of their fields are finding that this machine gets the seed into the slits more effectively than broadcasting seed and hoping the athletes will clear it in."

"As one manager in New York State told me, he would broadcast seed and then stand around watching birds have a feast on the seed," he says.

Kinkead says sports turf managers are also using the machine because of restrictions on chemical applications. "If they let the bare spots on the field go to weeds it's almost impossible for them to apply the chemicals to get rid of them. They have been looking for a more effective seeding process than what was available," he says.

John Burns, crew chief for the Parks Department in Clarence, NY, first used a TriWave last spring during a soccer field renovation. "We had very little grass on a very hard field and this machine sliced and laid the seed in," he says. "We used a crisscross pattern and the grass came in good.

"Since we bought and began using it on our fields, my seed costs are one-tenth what they were previously," Burns says.

Kinkead says the units' patented WaveBlade technology and seed delivery system addresses customers' needs for more effective seed placement with reduced turf damage. This technology uses powered, counter-rotating blades to create clean slits for improved seed-to-soil contact while minimizing turf disruption. The seed delivery system places seeds directly into slits without waste for increased germination, he says.

Dr. Dave Minner, Iowa State turf professor, said in his "Q&A" column in our April 2008 issue (p.50) that it's important to seed your field from mid-August through early September (for cool-season turf) and to use a solid tine aerifier or non-aggressive seeder to punch the seed into the ground. Avoid damaging or loosening existing turf.

Minner continues to study seeding rates and estimates that 50% of seed applied typically never makes a successful plant. "No wonder that higher than normal seeding rates are needed before gains in turf cover are realized when seed is applied during traffic," he says. ■



Before and after seeding with TriWave in New York State