

TRY “MINI-SOD” FOR BARE SPOTS

With low budgets for maintaining sports turf all the rage now, unfortunately, many readers may need to rely strictly on the resources you currently have on hand. That means sometimes re-sodding bare areas is not an option.

You can try overseeding but often with the use demands on your fields, the seed doesn't have much of a chance to survive to become a mature stand of grass. Even if there is an opportunity to re-sod some areas, you might have issues with matching the sod to the existing stand, or creating high or low spots.

Don Dunivan of Western Turf & Hardscapes in Reno, NV says there is one way to kill two birds with one shot. He suggests aerating both the bare spots on your field as well as areas that do have a good stand, then collecting the cores before they dry up. Dunivan says you then spread the freshly harvested plugs on the bare spots and use a roller to get them into the ground and ensure good contact with the soil. Then topdress with a good double-mix material and keep the areas wet as possible until the roots start to develop, just like new sod or seed. He recommends applying 15-15-15 or 6-20-20 fertilizer to help promote good rooting.

Dunivan says this can be done almost any time of the year if rainfall or water is available, since roots grow more during cooler months. Water as you would with new seed, he says; the plugs will root the same way as sod.

This method ensures that the “sod” matches the grass on the rest of your field and will save money and time. He says the method is effective for both cool and warm-season grasses. ■

Don Dunivan runs the Turf Management Services division for Western Turf in Reno, NV. He has been in the sod business since 1975. He can be reached at 775-771-7127.

