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On the cover: The Grand Canyon in Arizona has provided inspiration to man for centuries. Come to the STMA Conference in Phoenix and be inspired!



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# Lawns of plumbers



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**M**y lawn is not in good shape this fall. A hot, dry summer coupled with no spring overseeding or aeration, not to mention the divots I take while practicing my golf swing, have taken their toll. Luckily I live on the side of an Appalachian mountain where no one can see my mess just by driving by, though a few friends tease me about not using "inside" information from my job to produce a healthier result.

So I asked some turf managers what shape their lawns are in this fall:

"It's actually in pretty good condition considering the frequent summer rains in Florida, followed by periods of drought, water restrictions that limit watering to one day per week, and my dogs that like to use the yard as their own personal playground (and restroom)," says Phil Whitehouse, the manager for athletic operations for the City of St. Petersburg.

"Like doctors who smoke and plumbers with leaky faucets, I have a yard at home that adds nothing to my credibility as a turf professional," says Bob Studholme, a park manager for Fairfax County, VA. "In fact, just the opposite is probably true. As a general rule, I do not irrigate the lawn, using supplemental water only after seeding and for my ornamental beds, and keep the nutrition and weed management bare-boned. Exasperating as this is in my area we're still in the throes of an unseasonably warm, very dry weather pattern. In my 'lawn,' at least the crabgrass and other summer annuals are still in decent shape. On the plus side, I've only had to mow every 3 weeks or so!"

"I'm one that puts the home lawn in the low maintenance category," says Mike McDonald, CSFM, the turf manager at the University of Minnesota. "Mow at the most once a week, during the summer it could go to 3 weeks. I will not mow it if it is dry conditions or until it rains, unless we can't find lost shoes in it. Fertilize once a year, maybe twice every other year. Hand spray or pick a few weeds. Water just enough so it doesn't turn all brown.

"So in other words I do as little as possible, enough to keep it just behind the neighbors' so as not to embarrass the block. It's looking pretty good right now, we had about 6 inches of rain in the last month."

"As the saying goes, the cobbler's kids go barefoot, and the plumber's faucet leaks. My lawn is the last thing that gets any attention at my house," says Chris McGinty, superintendent of park maintenance, Framingham, MA. "My wife laughs when people ask me for advice, saying for someone who does this for a living you wouldn't know it from our house.

"Doesn't Kentucky Blue turn green around October 15?"

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## President's Message

# More education at Conference

**G**reat planning by great teams of members has the upcoming STMA Annual Conference shaping up to be our finest yet! Dr. Minner was flooded with applications during the "call for presentations." More than 100 practitioners and professionals offered to share expertise with us—far too many to use them all. These offers did allow us to expand the educational offerings by 40%, so you're going to have more topics to customize your learning experience. Dr. Minner is producing his fourth conference education program and with help from Conference Chair Abby McNeal and countless others, the conference bar is set very high this year.

You told us you wanted more education, so this year we added another day of education. Having the SAFE Golf Tournament and the first Seminar-on-Wheels tour on Tuesday allows for education on Wednesday. You told us you wanted additional science added to the conference, so Wednesday morning's optional education includes an Introductory and an Advanced Institute. Wednesday afternoon's pre-conference workshops are included in your conference registration fee. Or, choose instead to hop on a bus and take in an exceptionally good Seminar on Wheels tour.

Friday morning showcases an exciting new event. In partnership with the SAFE Foundation, STMA is paying tribute to Dr. Henry Indyk and Dr. Kent Kurtz. In separate presentations, the conference will honor the memory and life-long work of these STMA giants with high-end presentations on Field Testing Standards and Injury Surveillance Systems. Both men would be proud to see where STMA's conference is heading.

The Exhibition has added features this year. We'll be constructing a baseball pitcher's mound on the trade show floor! The opportunity to watch the construction process, step-by-step, will let us walk away with tips from the professionals on building our own perfect pitching platform. Student and faculty members will also treat us to poster sessions on their work. Posters will also highlight how last year's Student Challenge teams used their \$4,000 award for more sports turf education at their schools. The exhibition hall is primarily an opportunity for you to meet with our commercial partners, renew friendships, build new ones, and to gather information that we all can use to improve our facilities back home. This show is the roll-out for all that is tried and true, and new and improved.

The Awards Banquet is always the highlight of the conference for me, and it will once again be held on Friday night. Don't miss the opportunity to salute our members who have helped the profession and our association grow to great strength.

Your conference brochure should be on your desk. I've only touched on a very few of the exciting elements in which you'll want participate. Most of all, the conference is your chance to develop professionally. STMA is the association you can count on to elevate your career and this profession. Please do whatever it takes to get to Phoenix during the third week of January. I can't wait to see you there!



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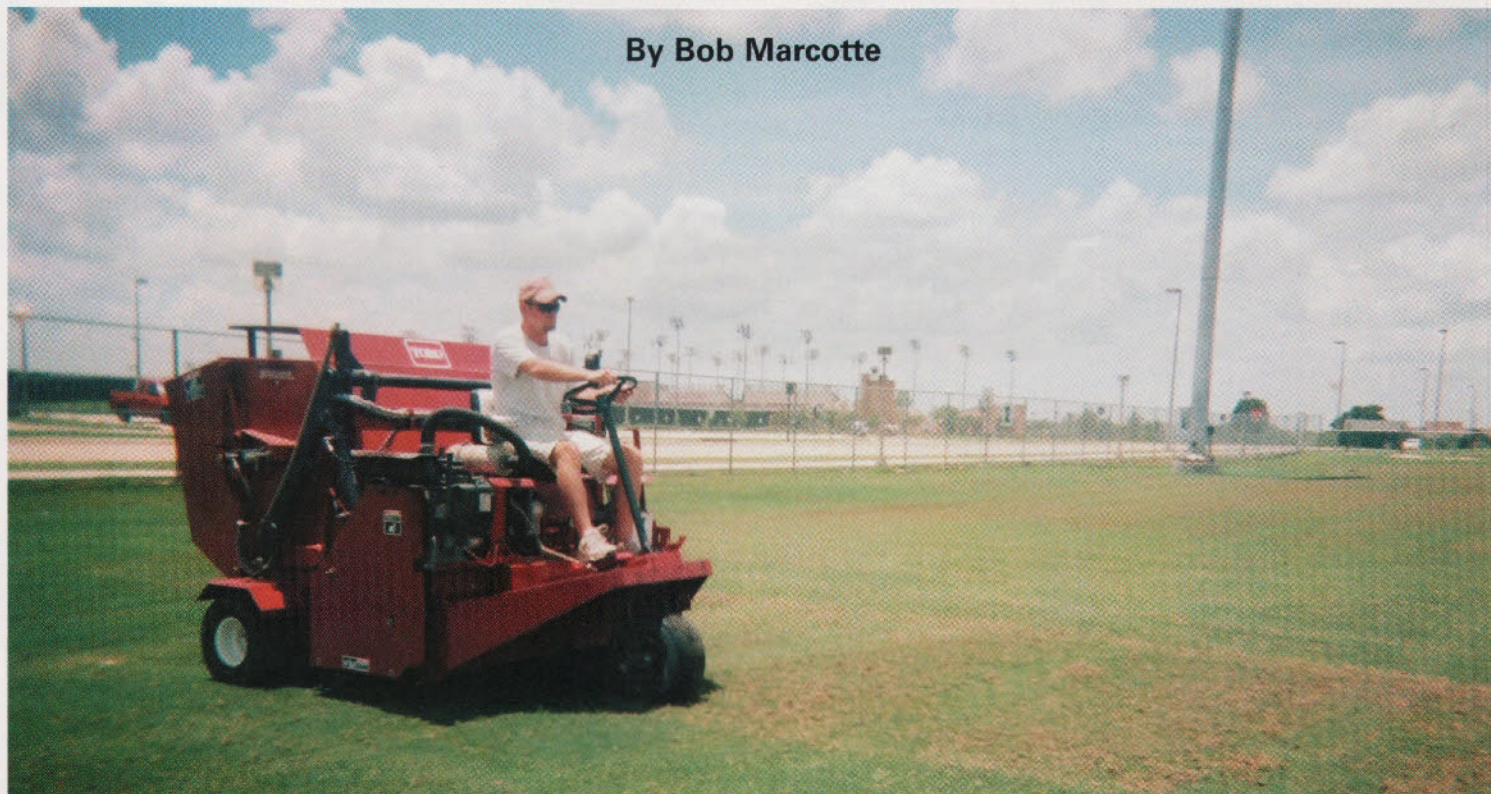
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# Post-season recovery techniques at Texas A&M University

By Bob Marcotte



**W**ith nearly 90,000 participants hitting the fields on 240 event days, the Penberthy Intramural Sports Center at Texas A&M University in College Station, endures some big-time foot traffic. What the maintenance team does post-season is often the most important process in determining how good a playing field is during the season.

Penberthy is a 38-acre, multi-use sports complex. The complex features 12 athletic fields that host a wide variety of intramural sports, sport club events, physical education classes, general recreational and special events such as athletic camps and various state, national and international championship tournaments.

In order to deliver the best possible turf quality, the Department of Recreational Sports has a well-defined turf maintenance program, and a dedicated staff to execute the plan. The department maintains a staff

of three full-time employees and nine part-time student workers who provide a high-quality grass surface for the students and organizations of Texas A&M University, predominately in support of the intramural and sport club programs.

Twice a year between seasons we work an aggressive agronomic program to restore the fields to the best condition possible before the next season. Our fields are predominately Tifway 419 bermudagrass. The process is virtually identical during the winter break, which is usually from the second week in December until the first of February and the summer break, usually early May through early June. The ultimate goal is to begin each season at peak condition.

With 12 distinct fields, proper planning is essential. We use a nine-step process for turf maintenance, moving each process through each field in sequence. With the equipment and staff available we can be at different stages of renovation on two to three fields at a time.



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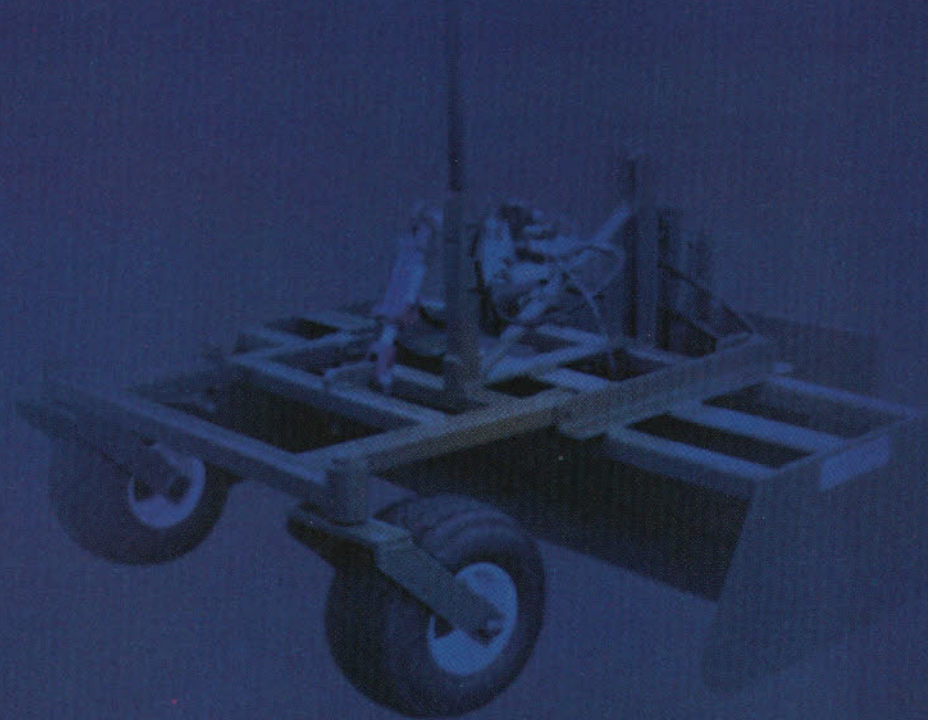


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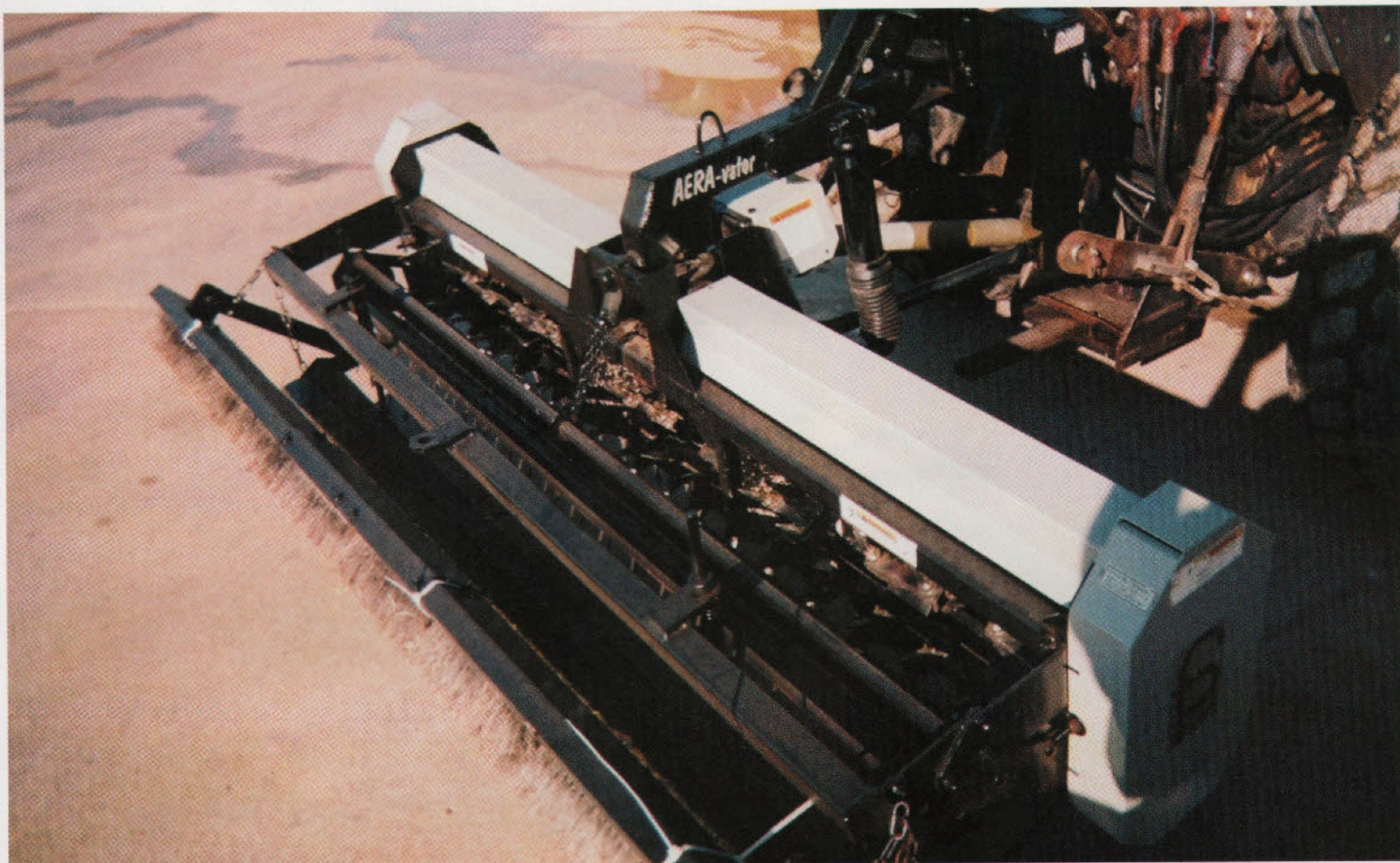


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**Step 1:** Slice aerate the field with 6 x 4-inch blades. We will run it four different directions in order to get a preliminary disruption of the soil and slicing of the bermudagrass, stimulating new growth.

**Step 2:** Spike aerate with an aerator with 6 x 3/4-inch spikes for increased soil disruption into the rootzone.

**Step 3:** Deep tine aerate with 10- x 1-inch hollow tines. This reduces deep compaction and allows some improvement in the soil structure.

**Step 4 (optional):** Use a pasture renovator when severe compaction exists. This old farm tool allows us to cut 3 to 4-inch slits in the compacted areas to break up the most severely compacted rootzones.

**Step 5:** Verticut two directions to cut the stolons and rhizomes of the bermudagrass plant and promote thicker turf. It also helps reduce thatch.

**Step 6:** Sweep to pick up the clippings from verticutting and reduce the amount of organic material in the turf.

**Step 7:** Topdress with sand to a depth of one-quarter inch. Over the years of topdressing the field recovery time after a rain has decreased dramatically. Top dressing with sand also helps smooth the surface and when drug into the aerator holes helps improve the soil structure.

**Step 8:** Drag with a 10-foot drag mat to brush the sand in to the canopy and into the holes created by the aerators.

**Step 9:** Fertilize based on recommendations from the soil lab from samples taken from the fields.

Water management during the entire process is critical. We don't want the fields too wet before we start, but once we open the canopy

