

Advancing the Turfgrass Industry in New Jersey and the World



TURF TIP TIME #5 with the NJTA: **Combat Compaction with Varied Depth of Aerification**

In the same way that bodybuilders switch up their exercise routines to avoid plateauing, turf managers must change up their aerification practices for the best results in combating compaction.

An underground threat to greenskeepers, compaction decreases soil oxygen, pore space, and water infiltration rates. Grasses growing in compacted areas have shallow roots, making them more vulnerable to drought and other stresses.

“Too much standard core aeration at a set depth year-after-year can eventually create a compaction layer at that depth. Farmers refer to this as a plow pan,” said Dennis DeSanctis, Jr. of Double D Turf, LLC. “These layers are very difficult to identify and can sneak up on you.”

There is no single cure-all for managing compressed soil, but periodically aerating at different levels is one technique in the turf manager’s toolbox. Whether you drill, slice, spike, punch, or water-inject the turf, the key is to fluctuate the reach of the cultivation.

To prevent and correct compaction, Dennis suggests periodically swapping out your standard aerification procedures with other options designed to alleviate soil

compaction, such as Deep Tine, Verti-Quake, or Drill & Fill.

“The Deep Tine process loosens the sub-soil with a “kick” action. Verti-Quake does the same with a “wave” action. These actions are usually not visible to the naked eye, but you can try watching slow motion videos taken at different angles to get a better view of these processes.”

Dennis also suggests purchasing a compaction meter to test the soil’s density at different depths on your property. “Use this tool immediately before and after an aeration service to see the differences,” he said. “Eventually a pattern will appear and help you to identify your best approach.”

Overall, don’t get set in your same-old ways. Remember to change up your aeration routine every so often to avoid all the issues that stem from soil compaction.



Deep Drilling in Progress



Drill and Fill Plug



*Verti-Quake Blades
"Fracturing" the Soil Profile*



**NJTA's TURF TIP TIME Brought to You By:
Dennis DeSanctis, Jr.**

Dennis DeSanctis Jr. is a Rutgers grad with a degree in Turfgrass Science. After working for Syngenta for over a decade, Dennis and his father started their own turf equipment and services company called **Double D Turf, LLC**. The company provides drill & fill, deep drill, deep tine, VertiQuake, topdress, and other turfgrass services for golf courses, athletic fields, and polo fields in the tri-state area.

www.njturfgrass.org | (973) 812-6467 | execdirector@njturfgrass.org



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