



TURF TIP TIME #10 with the NJTA: Variety is the Spice of Life and the Key to Aeration

For most golf courses and sports fields, April showers mean the season of punching holes and pulling plugs. Although the practice can create a short-lived disruption to play, aeration is essential to keeping playing surfaces healthy. It is highly beneficial for controlling thatch, relieving soil compaction, stimulating root growth, encouraging gas exchange, and improving drainage.

An annual process for most facilities, it is easy for turf managers to fall into an unchanging routine. However, it is important to use different tines and change the pattern in which properties are aerated. Dennis DeSanctis, Jr. of Double 'D' Turf, LLC, explains why variety is the key to aeration and offers other helpful tips for your aeration planning.



“Because all aeration tines wear out, grounds crews should aerate their fields in a different order each year. For example, if you normally work from area A to area B each year, go from area B to area A the following year. Regardless of the type of tine, (coring, venting tines, or deep), the steel material wears and can create a slightly different result from start to finish. Alternating the pattern of which your property is aerated each year can help to even out any wear that may be occurring with your equipment over time.”

Dennis also advises turf managers to recognize and pinpoint the intended purpose of their aeration work. “Know what you want to accomplish,” he said. “Are you managing thatch accumulation, alleviating compaction at a certain depth, decreasing soil organic matter, increasing sand content, improving surface drainage, or all of the above? Know your soil profile and list your aeration goals in order of priority based on your specific needs.”

In addition to changing the coring pattern and

being cognizant of your end-goal, Dennis reminds turf managers to check aeration depth regularly. “Measure and document core depth, especially with Deep Tine and Verti-Quake type processes. Year after year, you should be able to get a little deeper as the sub-soil loosens. If your depth isn’t improving, further investigation of your sub-soil should occur.”



Overall, aeration should be a comprehensive approach. For optimum results, utilize different aeration equipment and techniques to manage your 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.

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