

Alan Lewis Ltd

Sports Surface Consultant and Groundstaff Mentor

Planning for end of season Renovations

A **green profile** will help you assess what to do with your renovation. Only do what the profile tells you.

You are looking for – root depth

Layers of organic matter

Is the soil dry and suffering from dry patch

Remove any guess work and measure what you have eg: you only need to scarify down to the depth of the layer of thatch. Do not scarify deeper or you will only bring up soil and cover up the thatch.

Measure compaction with a penetrometer if you have one or a tent spike or a fork to feel if there is any resistance when you push it into the green.

If the spike or fork supports your weight then you have a compaction problem. If it goes in easy then there is no compaction issue.

This will give you an indication of the aeration equipment you will need for the renovations project and for autumn and winter.

The standard operations are: **Scarification**

Aeration

Overseeding

Fertilising

Top Dressing

Your profile will tell you to what degree you need to carry out the above operations.

Start by mowing your green at match height, maybe twice

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Scarification – Only scarify to the depth of your thatch

Once you have removed the thatch you have completed the first phase of renovation.

Try not to scarify at right angles (avoid making squares) and scarify at 30 degrees (create diamonds)

If you use scarifiers with tungsten tipped blades do not overuse or you will cut into the green and make the surface 'jelly' and lose the structure of the green.

Recommendation is no more than 2 directions with these

Controlling thatch takes time and cannot be done in one year. It is not just about removing thatch/organic matter, it also about getting oxygen into the green which will encourage the bugs in your green to break down the organic matter.

Aeration - Your profile and compaction test will tell you whether you need to think of using a solid tine or something bigger. Must aerate to get air into the soil to remove any 'pans', and improve root breaks etc.

2 types of aerator - drum type

Vertical action type

Aeration should continue after the seed germination and through autumn and winter period.

If you have a problem with your soil you may need to hollow tine and if you do, remember you will need to add more top dressing to fill in the holes particularly on a flat green.

Do not leave the hollow tine holes open on the green

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Overseeding – must obtain good soil to seed contact

Scarification and aeration will help to create this but additional help can be done with the use of a sarel/sorrell roller.

Once you have created the holes, you can then apply your seed, then brush the green which will in turn brush some of the seed into the holes which will increase seed to soil contact and help germination.

Seed: If you are having a wear issue consider a 30% perennial ryegrass but if you do use it then make sure you verticut on a regular basis during the season (Perennial Ryegrass 'crowns' and can affect the run of the wood)

Have a look at what your green is growing, standard mix of greens is fescue and bents.

As a simple guide inland greens on organic soil will grow bent grass and on drier, sandier greens, perhaps on the coast, will grow fescues.

Have a look at your green – contact your local seed supplier if you are unsure

If you want to be certain then go for a mix of fescue and bents to cover all options

Fertilising – Have a soil test, fertiliser is expensive.

Autum and winter feed contains more phosphate and potash as this is necessary for root growth and to protect the grass during winter.

Three types – Liquid, doesn't last and you do not want to be going on the green regularly when its wet in the winter

- Granular
- And slow release feed

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Top Dressing – Two reasons for applying top dressing:

- Cover the seed applied to aid germination
- To improve levels

If you haven't had the wear on the green this year then you will not need to apply the normal amount of top dressing – think about 50% of normal application.

Most importantly the top dressing must be worked into the greens surface – it should not look brown, it should look green once it has been worked in.

On crown green you could use a dragrush or dragmat to work the dressing in because they will follow the green. On a flat green, top dressing needs to be worked in with a straight edge, ideally a lute.

Renovation and winter work are a combination. Compaction is not relieved with just one aeration.

When the seed is germinated give it a couple of cuts (but remember to lift the height of cut so you just take off the top)

Once you have cut a couple of times then you are ready for your winter aeration programme

Use solid tines approximately once per month

Do not go on the green if the machine is going to make any marks on the green (other than holes) because these marks will be left in the green and affect the run of the ball.

Spike when you can and when you do your December spiking plan your next feed also to ensure the plant has everything it needs to help it through the winter.

Keep an eye out for disease

Remember to have a look at your profile, assess the green and use the appropriate equipment

