

Using Quality Organics in Greens Construction

Windsor Country Club – Windsor NSW

The benefits of 'natural fertility' can only be achieved by making a conscious decision to use quality inputs which can be genuinely effective at increasing and revitalising the soil's natural biological properties.

There are many in the industry that have been pioneering the use of OziVerm in their management programs and are seeing first hand the significant benefits available from incorporating beneficial biological products into existing management programs. One of these pioneers was Steve Seckhold at Windsor Country Club, in Sydney's west.

According to Steve, Windsor experiences some of Sydney's most extreme weather conditions making the task of managing the course quite difficult. The Windsor climate is typified by numerous frosts throughout the Winter, and periodic flooding and temperatures that are often in the high 30's or low 40's with high humidity through the Summer.

Greens Construction

In the Winter of 1999 Steve reconstructed two greens using OziVerm as an integral part of the root zone mix (added at approx 5% by volume). His goal was a simple one, to introduce some quality organic matter to assist with Cation Exchange Capacity, moisture retention and also to improve the biological activity within the root zone, hopefully to assist with disease pressure over Summer.

The two greens established extremely well, coming into play within two weeks, but this result had to be discounted because it took place in what turned out to be a 'mild' Winter.

In the Winter of 2000, Steve set about repeating the work, using the reconstruction of the 9th and 15th greens as his test case. This time Winter turned out to be one of the most severe in memory, with something like 25 heavy frosts occurring, but again the greens establish well and Steve was sold on his new construction blend.

The Summer that followed construction of the 9th and 15th was also one of the most extreme on record with temperatures often in the 40's for several days on end, Despite the prevailing conditions, when inspected in late February 2001, root depth was still well below the depth of the corer, and turf quality on the 9th and 15th was exceptional with no signs of stress or disease.

Steve has noted that the new Greens require less watering and feeding, and they are holding colour and quality better, even on the flared runoff area on the front of the 15th green which drains rapidly. Most importantly however, the members are pleased with the playability of the greens.

Tees and Renovation

Encouraged by the results, Steve started using OziVerm as an integral part of his renovation program for Tees as well and now believes he has improved the manageability of the course as a result.

One of the many observations that Steve has made is a dramatic reduction in the amount of chemicals in use at Windsor, which is not only helping make the budget go further but is also having a positive effect on the environment.

The Soilsmart choice

Soilsmart products and technical services are specifically designed to help manage one of the most complex and diverse eco-systems on earth - the interface between the soil and the plants we grow.

Soilsmart products will help you to build a strong and balanced biological soil eco-system, maintain aerobic soil conditions and develop a disease suppressive environment in the root zone.

Biological Diversity

The plants we rely on to grow quality crops, turf surfaces and landscapes all evolved in the presence of, and rely on, a strong and symbiotic relationship with beneficial soil organisms which play a significant role in regulating the health of the entire plant/soil eco-system.

The key to success however is diversity - nature is built on it — consequently we have developed a range of products and programs that have a broad bio-diversity and offer long term benefit. They are also based around indigenous Australian biological species which are suited to our climatic and soil conditions.

Even small changes to your existing programs can improve biology and quickly translate into improved aerobic soil conditions and healthier and more resilient plants. These advances also result in more extensive and vigorous root systems and an increase in water use efficiency. Maintaining bio-diversity and balance also encourages the conversion and retention of minerals, increasing fertilizer efficiency and minimising the need for repeated applications.

Soilsmart products and programs allow you to stay ahead of pests and disease and offer a truly preventative approach to soil and plant health by:

- Building Organic Carbon reserves in your soil.
- Establishing a natural defensive network against disease and pests.
- Strengthening plant health and stress tolerance.
- Increasing fertilizer efficiency.
- Sustaining soil Oxygen levels.
- Reducing costs and improving risk management.

The science that enables us to measure and manipulate the soils' biological properties has advanced rapidly in the past decade, bringing about a much better understanding of how we can influence this very complex bio-system to our advantage. Soilsmart have maintained an association with and are accreditation with organisations like The Soil Foodweb Institute USA, who are at the forefront of research and technology development in this important area of environmental management.