

## Plant Exchange

# Par For The Course

## Linking Hillcrest's Golf Turf And Home Lawns



BY BRENDA K JOHNSON  
P&D Correspondent

Who hasn't admired an expansive green golf course? What does it take to care for it? How does golf turf care compare to that of home lawns? What does it take to achieve the green turf for golfers? How do you get and keep a fast course in South Dakota?

Waren Muller is Hillcrest Golf and Country Club's general manager and certified golf course superintendent. He shares his insights on turf grass compared to the home lawn.

### CARE OF GREENS

"I mow every day," Muller says. "Most of the day I spend outside working, with a portion (inside) on other operations of the facility. You have to be on the property and see what changes. It changes fast. I know the front right of nine will be dryer than the backside of seven."

Muller has managed the classic designed 18-hole golf course the past 11 years. Golfers recognize the course as one of the top in South Dakota. Hillcrest will host the Dakotas Tour Pro-Am Invitational, August 6th - 9th. Other events will target men, women, and children this season.

Muller's prime outdoor job is walk mowing the putting greens. Greens are the most precisely even surfaces on the golf course.

"It's the preferred way to take care of the playing surface. Walk mowers (leave a) smoother, better playing surface, better quality cut, and it's appealing," Muller says. He walk-mows in opposite directions to achieve the striped

appearance.

He refers to a golf walk mower that only has wheels for transport and uses a heavy roller to smooth the greens and trim the bentgrass. Golf walk mowers are cost prohibitive for home lawns. These mowers smooth uneven surfaces because beneath the putting green is sand, not soil like a lawn.

"Most golf courses today have 12 inches of sand on the greens. Hillcrest greens weren't built that way, but have been top dressed with sand so many times over the course of 60 years, so the base is about 8 inches," he says. Sand covered with growing bentgrass provides a flexible smooth putting green.

"If we have an inch of rain, our bentgrass greens are drained and ready for play," he says. "You can't do that with a soil base. (Turf) roots are oxygenated and compaction from foot traffic is alleviated. Drainage reduces grass disease." Bentgrass grows well in sand, whereas lawn grass grows better in soil and requires less water and fertilizer.

Bentgrass is a preferred cool season dense grass for putting greens where it can be grown. Thin blades can be mowed quite short. This produces a smooth even surface. Augusta National Golf Club is reported

to have cooling systems installed below their greens. This keeps the sand cool so that bentgrass can be grown for putting greens. However, bentgrass requires frequent mowing to look attractive. Bentgrass also needs more fertilizer, water, dethatching and aeration maintenance than Kentucky bluegrass or fescues that are common in home lawns. Bentgrass is prone to fungal disease.

"We mow the bentgrass under 1/8th inch during the growing season," Muller says. "My lawn at home, I mow at two inches."

The crown of the grass above the roots needs to be protected for grass to live. Putting greens can be high traffic areas.

"We constantly top dress with sand to protect the crowns where the growing points are. Bentgrass has the ability to carry on photosynthesis and respiration in that small blade surface, unlike lawn grass."

Game of golf demands a fast, consistently smooth green.

"We mow greens every day. You can't get that if you don't. Bentgrass is growing. If you don't cut it off and smooth it out every day, you'll have a bumpier, slower putting green."

Newer low-mow Kentucky bluegrass varieties grow in the rest of the Hillcrest Golf Club course. Some home lawns grow these varieties. Muller looks for course turf features such as early spring green up and late season green quality. He prefers fewer water and fertilizer inputs and less maintenance than bentgrass.

Hillcrest Golf Club doesn't have a standard golf opening date for golfing or closing date due to changeable weather. This

year mowing began in March and typically ends November 1st. Tree trimming and other projects continue almost year round.

"We put growth regulators (that slow grass growth) on almost all our acreage except the course rough," he says. "We do that to limit how much clippings we have a day. It keeps some surfaces smooth and in some cases, reduces mowing." Rough and fairways are low-mow Kentucky bluegrass.

Rough is maintained closer to requirements of a home lawn. He fertilizes it once in June and would consider an early fall application except cost is a major consideration. More fertilizer means more mowing. At home his preference is to spread a similar amount of fertilizer over five applications for the season.

Fairways are kept under three-quarters of an inch and need more fertilizer to live at that height.

Growth regulators seem to help fairways with spread of fungal disease as well. Fairways have to be mowed 2-3 times a week. Muller thinks that fuel usage, labor, and emissions are lower when he applies growth regulators.

### FASTER PLAYING SURFACE

Growers, lawn and garden enthusiasts, and golf superintendents learn about seasonal transitions. A flowerbed of growing plants cannot look the same in May and August in South Dakota. Muller grows turf. He has to work with Mother Nature during the season.

"The way the course plays, it's slow in spring and it speeds up in June as the grass grows. In July the course slows down because it's often humid and hard to dry out. The course plays slower, and sometimes you throw in a disease, sometimes moving faster than you can put chemical down," he said. Another transition for him is August.

"It is dry and you are coming out of disease season and you can't get enough water and your crop is healing up from a long summer and you move to the end of September. Humidity is lower and the plant is moving "food" from the leaves to the roots. With less moisture in the fall combined with the natural physiology of the plant the course naturally speeds up in the fall."

Golfers want the golf superintendent to make the greens faster.

"We can make the ball roll one or two feet faster compared to the day before. We know how many feet we'll speed up the green with the walk mower. But if it rains

■ PAR,  
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### Farm Equipment - Guns - Shop - Miscellaneous

# AUCTION

**Saturday, June 20 -- 11 a.m.**

LOCATED: 44401 S. Jim River Road, Yankton, SD

from Yankton, SD 2 miles east on Highway 50, 1 1/4 miles north on Willow Dale Road then east on S. Jim River Road.

**TRACTORS:** JD 6400 2wd, c-a-h, power quad and JD 620 loader, joy stick, grapple and bale fork; Mahindra 7010 MFD, c-a-h, and ML170 loader, bucket and bale fork, 1258 hrs; White 2-105, c-a-h, 4850 hrs; Oliver 880, nf and Dual 320 loader.

**RV, TRUCK, PICKUP:** 2002 TrailRite 29' RV w/Ford E450 V10 Chassis, 34,600 miles, sleeps 6, fully self-contained, very nice; 1995 IHC 4900 DT 466 diesel truck w/27' 96" flatbed; 1999 Ford F-150 2wd ext cab, short box, auto 4.6.

**MACHINERY:** C-IH MD 82 7' 3 pt disc mower, like new; 2007 NH 499 12' swing tongue windrower, 540 rpm, like new; JD 535 baler; IHC 47 small square wire tie baler; Gehl 520 12 wheel v-rake; Farmhand 5 and 7 wheel rakes; 8 bale trailer; 8 bale accumulator and fork; 3 pt gopher getter; 2 horse trailer; Snowmobile trailer; Boomgaars 3 pt spreader, new; 18' pony cart; Ferguson 2 row lister and cultivator; IHC 2 row planter; 2 wheel truck dolly; 2 wheel trailer; Portable cement mixer; Bale elevators; Dump rake; Bale spear.

**BOAT, GUNS:** Sells at approximately 12:30 p.m. - Forester 16' fiberglass boat; Mercury 15 hp ob and trailer; Premier .22 pump, oct barrel, SN: 7216K; Invest Arms 12 ga 3" o/u; Dickson Falcon 20 ga 3" dbbl; Stevens 67 12 ga pump 3" vent rib; JC Higgins 12 ga pump; Glenfield 70 .22 auto & scope; .22 revolver; Several rods, reels and fishing tackle.

**SHOP & MISCELLANEOUS:** 60,000 lb shop press; Cherry picker; Rockwell table saw; MW radial arm saw; Craftsman miter saw; Skil 10" band saw; 16 spd drill press; Bench grinder; Acetylene torch; Arc welder; Air compressor; Gas power washer; Stihl chain saw; Chop saw; Side grinders; Vises; Battery chargers; Several electric and 12V power tools; Transit; JD hay tester; Socket and wrench sets; Many miscellaneous hand tools; Jacks; 110 gal pu fuel tank; Ramps; Pintle hitch; Older Yazoo front deck mower; Ramps; Tires; Shop heaters; Plus many more miscellaneous items.

This is a very clean well cared for line of items with all the major equipment very well maintained and always shedded.

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**SDSU Extension Hosts Feedlot Tour July 14**  
Posted Thursday, June 4th, 2015 by SDSU iGrow  
Categorized: Livestock, Beef  
BROOKINGS, S.D. - SDSU Extension teams up with the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association - Cattle Feeder Council to host a feedlot tour July 14, 2015.  
"Cattle producers often wonder what they can do to improve efficiencies and practices, this tour may give them the answers they are looking for," said Reid McDaniel, SDSU Extension Beef Feedlot Specialist.  
This tour provides attendees with a first-hand look at feedlot operations as well as an opportunity to visit with the feedlot owner/managers as well as SDSU and SDSU Extension staff.  
The event begins at 7 a.m. with a bus departing from the South Dakota State University motor pool lot (corner of 13th St. and Medary Ave, Brookings) at 7:30 a.m. To attend the tour, you may either join the bus, or meet at the specific locations.  
Tour schedule  
8:30-10 a.m. Redstone Feeders (21139 425th Ave, Croquis). Refreshments served courtesy of Corn Belt Livestock Services.  
11-1:30 p.m. Warkentien Feedyard (17515 424th Ave, Clark). Lunch served courtesy of Dakotaland Feeds.  
2:15-3:45 p.m. Moes Feedlot (16319 445th Ave, Florence). Refreshments served courtesy of Purina Land O'Lakes.  
5-6:30 p.m. J&J Farms (19736 465th Ave, Bruce). Refreshments served courtesy of CHS.  
7 p.m. Arrive in Brookings. Registration deadline is July 7, 2015