

Bermudagrass Polo Fields
Basic Maintenance Program

Monthly Schedule

- Jan. – Feb. Every two or three years, collect soil samples for each field and take to the local county extension office for analysis.
If ag lime is recommended, it can be applied anytime when the soil surface is dry.
- Late Feb. – mid Mar. If more than 10 – 20% of the dormant bermuda is covered with green/growing annual bluegrass or broadleaf weeds, spray one quart of RoundUp/acre. Best results will be obtained if the weeds are actively growing – after 2 or 3 days of mild, late winter weather.
- Late April – early May 60 # N / acre (equivalent to 130 # of urea, 46-0-0 OR 175 # of ammonium nitrate, 34-0-0. For this application ONLY, utilize a complete N-P-K fertilizer analysis if soil test suggests additional phosphate or potash is needed.
- Mid May – Early June If areas of the bermuda winter-killed or was killed by excessive traffic, too much south or south west shade, or poor surface soil drainage, then consider seeding the killed areas with 'Riviera' bermuda. It is best to slit seed to scarify the soil surface, but be careful not to bury the seed more than 1/8th inches deep. If dead field areas can be heavily aerified or disturbed by other seeding equipment, then broadcasting the seed over the loosened surface will usually work. If at all possible, especially during drought, keep the surface moist with irrigation. Seed with approximately 2 lbs/1000sq ft or 80 lbs per acre of coated 'Riviera' seed. Core aerification prior to seeding will usually help soften the soil surface and improve germination.

Late May – Early June

Same N fertilization as suggested for late April. Mid May thru Sept. Mow with reel or rotary mower, one or two times per week. When grass is growing fast, mowing will be needed at least every 3 days to maintain best quality. Preferred height is usually 1 to 1.5 inches (preferred 1.5 inches if mowing with a rotary finishing mower). To increase winter hardiness of the bermuda, raise the mowing height in early September, or quit mowing at that time to allow more foliage to accumulate, thus increasing the insulation over the above ground bermuda stolons.

Mid June - mid July

When crabgrass becomes evident and begins to compete with the bermuda, spray MSMA at 1/3 gallon per acre(with 6#a.i. Gal of MSMA) followed by another spray at the same rate in 7 - 10 days. This controls growing crabgrass and foxtail, and also controls some yellow nutsedge and broadleaf weeds.

Late June – early July

Same fertilization as for late April.

June - August

Core aerify monthly and drag-in the extracted cores. This helps smooth the surface, increase rooting and relieves compaction. To be effective, core aerification should be on ~ 3 inch centers, with 3 to 4-inch deep cores – common performance specs with hydraulic core aerifiers. If using pull type core aerators, this spacing of cores is best accomplished by traversing the field at least two times – each time the field is aerated. When core aerification is normally utilized to reduce compaction, then one can often roll the field with a heavy roller to help smooth out some of the divots and undulations. If attempting to use a slicing type aerifier, then only aerify when the soil is very dry – giving some

shattering effect of the soil. If slice aerified when soil is moist, then additional soil compaction often occurs. Also, since the slicing aerifier does not fill divots, one may consider topdressing heavily deviated areas of the field during the summer with $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 inch of sand.

June - Oct.

Only during severe drought and/or when the surface is dangerously hard, irrigate with about 1 inch of water per week. However, avoid play on the field when the surface is wet from irrigation or rainfall and easily divoted. One wet event will cause permanent, un-repairable surface damage. July If broadleaf weeds such as clover, dandelion, plantain, etc. become evident, spray with 1 # of 2,4-D plus $\frac{1}{4}$ # of dicamba per acre. Trimec Classic is a commonly purchased mix of broadleaf herbicides with broad efficacy for weeds on polo fields.

Late July – early Aug.

Same fertilization as for late April.

Late Sept – late Oct

If winter annuals such as *Poa annua*, chickweed and henbit have previously infested the dormant bermuda, then one should apply prodiamine (Barricade or generic) pre-emergent herbicide at 0.8 # ai/acre to control these winter annuals prior to them becoming established.

Oct or Nov or Dec

Apply 130 # / acre of muriate of potash, 0-0-60. This may not be needed if soil test reveals very high K in soil.