A Comparison of Natural Organic Fertilizers

The use of natural organic fertilizers is becoming more popular in our industry. The release of nutrients from these fertilizers is dependent on microbial breakdown of the organic fertilizer. This paper reported on a study that looked at the effect of the addition of a microbial inoculum (provided in the fertilizer) on nutrient release. Pots of tall fescue and bermudagrass were treated with Ringers Turf Restore, with and without the inoculum, and with urea. Urea treated pots had much greater growth rates and nitrogen recoveries (in clippings) than the inoculated and uninoculated organic fertilizers. The Turf Restore with the inoculant did not enhance turf growth compared to the uninoculated material. Also, the presence of inoculum did not impact infection with Rhizoctonia spp.


Organic Sources for Sports Turf Rootzone Mixes

Peats and other organic materials are commonly used in rootzone mixes for sports fields and putting greens. It is normally a component of a mix with sand, and provides greater moisture and nutrient holding abilities of the rootzone mix. We know little, however, about characterizing peats for these purposes. This paper reported on a study that looked at the influence of peat on moisture retention in a rootzone mix. The primary characteristics of the peat that were evaluated were percent organic matter (of the peat) and fiber content. The results showed that peats with fiber contents >45%, such as coarse sphagnaums, may be too coarse. These peats increased the moisture holding capacity of the mix, but much of that water was held in the peat too tightly to be available to the plants. Likewise, peats with fiber contents less than 20%, as in mucks, contained to many fine particles that slowed down infiltration rates.


Irrigation of Turfgrass With Effluent

Sewage effluent and other secondary waters have become important sources of irrigation water. The authors concluded that no detrimental effects were found after three years’ use.

Peats with fiber contents >45%, such as coarse sphagnaums, increased the moisture holding capacity of the mix, but much of the water was unavailable to the plants.

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