

UPI Bi-Weekly Updates

Fall means colder weather and changing leaves. But for the UPI fields it is the season of maintenance! It is during this “down” growing time that cultural practices take place on the fields to aid in winter preparation and season repair. On **September 24** we completely shut down the irrigation system. With the colder weather, we do not want to encourage growth. A frost on lush grass can cause plant shaft damage.

It was during this time and again on **September 25** that all the custom topdressing mix was delivered to the fields. This mix is specifically mixed at Mountainviews location to ensure quality. We specialize the mix to the field needs. This year was a dry year and therefore we reduced the percentage of sand in the mix and replaced that with topsoil.

With all the material on location we began topdressing on **September 25** and completed it on **September 26**. This is a 2–3 day process and not applying topdressing properly. Too much can cause plant suffocation and too little will be a waste of material.

As the irrigation heads were marked and topdressing was applied, another operator took the opportunity to begin aeration. This will allow some of the topdressing material to migrate into the soil. This was started on **September 26** and completed on the **27**.

On **September 27** while the aeration was getting completed, a low nitrogen fertilizer application and seeding was applied. After aeration is the optimum time to apply seed and fertilizer as the exposed soil (and new topdressing material) make for an ideal growing medium. The fields will begin to go into a 1–2 times a week mowing schedule as to help discourage extra leaf growth this time of year. In the fall turf focus is on root health to aid in winter protection and not leaf color and growth.

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

We are few short days from welcoming our next season. I believe it is safe to say that it has been a great summer season at UPI. While things were very hot and dry, bringing drought like conditions, the fields weathered well and are so lush and green going into the fall!

On **September 13**, we went to the fields do to do the first step in fall maintenance, fertilizing! This is a crucial first step before any more remedial work can be done as the extra nutrients help make for a stronger turf. A weak turf/root can mean only more added stress to the plant with cultivation practices.

The continued warm weather and healthy plant has meant that we have been mowing the fields 3 times a week but we expect that to drastically drop as the nights and days get cooler.

Wednesday, September 5, 2018

Although Fall weather is upon us, it is prime time growing season for turf! The rain, the warm sun and yet cooler temperatures makes the grass thrive this time of year! While others are looking for pumpkin spice everything, we are diving head first into turf maintenance. The maintenance that occurs in the fall is key in ensuring plant health through harsh winters.

On **August 24** aeration occurred at the fields. The fields were beginning to feel very compacted due to draught and regular play. This will help the soil loosen allowing for more nutrients and water to reach the roots.

With the ground in better condition to accept other maintenance and the weather having cooled off (slightly) on **August 27** overseeding was applied to all of the fields at a rate of 2 pounds per 1000 square feet. The mixture used was a sports field blend that contained Kentucky Bluegrass, Chewings Red Fescue and Perennial Ryegrass.

On **August 29** a crew arrived at the fields to trim at the fields. This is area's that are not accessible to the large tractor driven mower.

Currently the fields are being cut 3 times a week as there have been favorable growing conditions. Overall, the fields are looking to be in great shape for this time of year. While there will be more regular overseeding in the Fall, it will be done as the regular practice versus for reparative purposes.

Wednesday, August 22, 2018

The drought and heat wave are over for the time being. With this welcomed relief, we will focus our efforts on bringing the turf out of dormancy. This will be a slow process as encouraging too much growth at once, can actually do damage.

On **August 14** a crew went out to the fields to re-mark the irrigation heads and to inspect the current state of dormancy and soil temperature. It was determined that cultural practices can resume safely. The turf mowing increased to 2-3 times a week to help encourage some more growth.

Wednesday, August 8, 2018

A **very** hot and dry summer continues into August. In conditions like these, some turf practices have to change in order to not stress the turf further. Instead of promoting turf growth, we want to hinder it. Instead the focus is on root strength which will help the plant get through a drought period.

On **July 24** there was topdressing material being sent to the fields in preparation for topdressing. Another crew arrived on this day to begin the slice aeration.

The topdressing continued on **July 25** and was finally completed on **July 26**. On these days, the topdressing was also applied and completed. We saw a window of opportunity that brought slightly cooler temperatures because of a storm.

The promised rain fell and there was enough accumulation that we were able to turn off the deep well irrigation on **August 1**.

At this time the mowing is continuing at 1–2 times a week as mowing can promote leaf shoot growth. The less mowing during a drought, the better.

Wednesday, July 25, 2018

We hear that it was a successful and safe tournament! Congratulations OCUA!

It had gotten so hot and dry for over a long stretch of time that even irrigation turf was looking brown. The last few days of rain will help make everything extremely green again!

On **July 12** a second summer fertilizer application was applied. During times of extreme heat, it is still important to feed the plant but it means in a different application. To not stress the plant out more, it is best to do smaller applications of fertilizer. We call it “spoon feeding” the plant. It uses less energy for it to take up smaller amounts of nutrients.

On **July 18** two valve boxes were replaced.

Once the tournament was complete, the irrigation heads were re-marked to ensure that the operation of the aeration machine would not run over them. This was important because on **July 24**, aeration was done in order to help relieve some compaction that would happen from regular and tournament play.

Topdressing material was beginning to be delivered from the fields on **July 24**.

We were mowing the fields at 1–2 times a week but believe that will be increases with the recent fertilizer application and rainfall.

Wednesday, July 11, 2018

One of the worst drought seasons we have seen in business was in 2012. It was excessively warm and with no rain for almost 4 months. While 2018 isn't as bad as that year, we are seeing similarities and Environment Canada will be declaring drought conditions very soon.

On **July 4** while inspecting some dry areas, it was discovered that a few heads were no longer turning in a full circle and therefore, not watering the whole area. The repair began and 3 heads were replaced.

A double crew of 10 people arrived at the fields on **July 5th** to continue the job of replacing the heads.

July 6 we noticed that very dry and warm conditions were continuing into the long range forecast and the water levels were low enough that the deep well was turned on. The irrigation repair crew had marked all of the heads on the previous day which is necessary for the aeration that happen on July 6. The crew continued to work on replacing the faulty irrigation heads.

On **July 9** the irrigation work was completed and the second day of aeration work was done.

Worried about the heat and the lack of precipitation, the irrigation cycle was increased slightly to allow for one extra watering per field, per week. This should help keep the grass from dying off but still be within permit regulation. You will notice some browning of the turf as it goes into dormancy during the head and dry times. This is not dying turf. This is the turf “hibernating” and using less energy until better conditions arrive.

During this time of dormancy, the grass conserves its energy and therefore grows less quickly. As of July 11, the grass is getting mowed once per week. Not only is the grass growing less, but we would like to reduce any potential added stress by mowing it more often and encouraging it to use up the energy reserves.

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

Welcome summer! And as we get closer to July, Mother Nature reminds us of just how hot it can be! We suspect that turf growth should slow down slightly in the next coming weeks as the weather heats up and there is less constant precipitation.

On **June 14** a large crew from Mountainview Turf headed to the fields to do a bit of “Spring Cleaning”. This involved trimming of areas that are not regularly kept short by the large set of mower as they are too large for some areas like the parking lot, bridges and fenced areas. In early June a break in the main irrigation line was discovered. As we expected some hot weather to arrive soon, it was important that it get repaired. On **June 21** the irrigation break was located, dug up and removed on field 4.

Unfortunately, during this 2 week report period, some vandals drove onto field number 5 and caused deep ruts. Thankfully, the damage was mostly contained to one area. On **June 22**, a crew went out to repair this area so that it could come back “online”. This involved rolling out the area, adding a little bit of seed or sod.

The last week of June usually is the best time to apply a second application of spring formulated fertilizer but it was decided that it best to hold off until after the warm long weekend. If the fertilizer was applied and did not have time to adequately be taken in by the soil, it could cause burn to the fields.

Wishing everyone a Happy Canada Day!

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

The beautiful weather and season has started! While it was a bit later of a Spring this year, the turf growth has not shown signs from the late snowfall. At this time the mowers are going out 2-3 times a week, especially after the late May application of fertilizer. The turf is receiving adequate nutrients, sun and precipitation.

While the weather has been nice, the last couple of weeks there have some very warm days and it was decided that the irrigation system should be turned on. On June 10, the external operations manager went and turned on the system and checked it over again. The irrigation system will only irrigate the turf when the sensor indicates there has not been significant rainfall to ensure healthy turf growth.

On June 10, two irrigation heads were also replaced as they had worn over the years and were no longer functional.

Overall, we are pleased with the state of the fields. The Spring dormant turf has completely rebounded from the winter and the soil temperature is warm enough that there will be a surplus of growth until the extreme heat happens later in the season.

Wednesday, May 30, 2018

Happy 2018! And what a way to kick off the new season but with optimum weather for both growth and play! It has been a few years since we have seen such a glorious Spring! It allows us to get out there and working right away! No rain delays or floods!

On **April 26** Mountainview's external manager went to the fields to do a Spring assessment. He wanted to see the condition from after the winter and assess the timeline as to when work could begin. He discovered beautiful and even somewhat dry fields. The fields were showing new growth lines from Fall seed germination.

Without the need of rubber boots, the official "Spring walkthrough" took place between the owners of Mountainview and Chris Castonguay on May 7.

Since everyone was pleased with the look of the fields, the mowing unit and tractor were able to be delivered on May 9. Another team went with a heavy rolling unit and tractor to help smooth out the fields.

Since they were not able to complete it on the first day, the crew returned to finish rolling the fields on May 10. The mower also did its first pass of the fields only having to avoid a couple of wet areas. Another crew arrived to do the first application of Spring fertilizer. This is a

specialized formula designed to help grow out some of the “old” turf that was sitting dormant under the snow. Growing out this old turf quickly and feeding the plant properly, we are able to ensure healthy plant growth for the remainder of the Spring.

The Ottawa Valley experienced intense winds in early May and during the walk-through, it was discovered a few trees and limbs had fallen. A tree removal team arrived on May 14 to remove all of the debris.

On May 17 a large crew from Mountainview began and finished locating, edging and painting all of the irrigation valve boxes.

We did experience a little bit of rain in the month of May so we did not have to turn on the irrigation system. On May 28 Mountainview’s irrigation expert did a thorough inspection of the irrigation system and heads. This involved charging the system but not yet turning it on so that it begins watering the fields. It was discovered that there was 1 broken head that will be needing replacement.

Overall, we are pleased with the appearance of the fields and how they wintered. There appears to be no damage from the large amounts of snow and ice. We are also encouraged by how well the fields have repaired after a lot of foot traffic on wet conditions in 2017. The fields are filling in nicely and we believe it will be great 2018 playing season and we look forward to working together to ensure that happens.