



Athletic Field Design

During the winter - Don't forget to feed your fields!

By Mike Hebrard, Athletic Field Design

Just because the outdoor sports season is over it doesn't mean our athletic fields should be left to rest.

Unfortunately the old cliché, out of sight, out of mind, is no truer said than when athletics moves indoor for the winter. More importantly your turf-grass areas are in dire need of nutrients during the late fall and winter months.

Shoots and roots growth of cool-season turfgrasses, (rye, fescue, bluegrass) occur most readily in the temperature ranges of 60° - 70° Fahrenheit, respectively. Root growth of cool-season grasses will continue at soil temperatures close to freezing. Shoot growth will cease at higher temperatures for root growth. Late season nitrogen fertilization capitalizes on this differential.

During winter fertilizer application, carbohydrates produced will be more efficiently used for root, rhizome and stolon growth during this period. Late-season fertilization is not dormant fertilization. In a nutshell, remember there are two times you must fertilize, once in the winter to store the carbohydrates and other important nutrients, and the second is two weeks before your mother-in-law comes to visit. Or two weeks before the big game, you sell your house, have a party, etc. Everything else, in other words is for color.

So, if your school or park can only afford to fertilize their fields once a year, remember just like the Holiday Season, Thanksgiving to New Years, that's when we all take in the food.