

Compost use at Renaissance Golf Club

The Renaissance Golf Club and its majestic course in East Lothian exude quality. So much so that Richard Windows, Agronomist of the Sports Turf Research Institute, was moved to comment that: *"What I saw at The Renaissance Club is the new benchmark for links course conditioning, presentation and playing qualities"*.

This is praise indeed and is an excellent endorsement for the use of compost – given that the course receives regular applications of the product as part of a divot mix and top-dressing material.

Paul Seago, the Club's Head Superintendent has, for many years, been an exponent of compost-based products, having been something of a pioneer in moving away from fensoil/peat to locally-sourced green compost as a cost-effective and more sustainable alternative. Paul suggests that it made no sense (financially or environmentally) to source fensoil stripped from fenland in East Anglia and hauled hundreds of miles to the course when a supply of quality-controlled green compost (which has now attained USGA rootzone standards) was just down the road.

The compost has been used as a construction material and as the organic fraction of the divot mix and fairway topdressing to encourage more stability and retention of nutrients in the soil.

Fairways are spread with a 90/10 sand/compost blend twice a year; typically in March and September and the same 90/10 blend forms the divot mix for patching fairways and tees. Paul suggests that the 10% compost fraction "gives the seed the little push it needs to germinate effectively", and that "germination is both noticeably quicker and stronger with the compost blend".

In short, he believes he has found the ideal organic fraction to complement the golf course.

Unlike the majority of the greenkeepers that are utilising compost-based products, Paul buys in the material neat so that he can oversee the blending with sand himself and suggests that this offers more flexibility as it can be blended to various ratios depending on the end-use. The compost for use as a topdressing and divot mix is pre-screened to <6mm – which is ideal for these uses, and where compost is used as a construction material for new tees or reconstruction of bunkers, a 10mm screened compost is used – as this offers a better structure.



The 90/10 sand/compost blend that Paul describes as a having an appearance of a "dirty sand"



Fairway subject to topdressing with compost twice a year and regular divot patching



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