WP Bowls Standing Committee for GreensCare

May 2025 Newsletter

Getting Ready for Winter

Winter is a very important period for green maintenance and preparation for the next season ahead. This means that a thorough winter maintenance plan is essential to ensure that the green is in good condition for the upcoming spring.

Turfgrass growth slows right down due to the colder conditions, but it does not come to a complete stop. **Keep on mowing the green regularly**, at a height of 4 mm or more to avoid build-up of thatch and to maintain a good playing surface. Avoid mowing under too wet conditions, and make sure the mower blades are sharp because the grass is more susceptible to damage and disease in winter. In addition to mowing, brush the greens regularly, replacing one of the regular cut with a thorough brush.

Ensure there is **good drainage and aeration** to avoid compaction, waterlogging and poor conditions in the root zone. Make sure the drains are clear and allow heavy rains to drain away quickly to avoid waterlogging the green.

Monitor conditions throughout the winter season. Weeds can grow faster than the more dormant grass and can quickly take over on a green. Hand weeding or spot treatments with the appropriate herbicide must be done to keep the weeds under control.

Despite the much slower growth of turfgrass in the cold conditions, there may be a need for some **fertilisers** to make sure the grass is ready for strong growth when we get through winter. This is a good time to have a soil analysis done so that the fertilisers can be selected based on specific needs and recommendations.

Planning your renovation

Winter is also the best the time to start planning your next renovation for the upcoming summer and league season. There is a good guideline for greens renovation on our GreensCare website (https://greenscare.wpbowls.co.za/greens-renovation/). Have a good look at its contents to remind yourself of the preparation and work that is needed.

Hollow tining should be done after the renovation, as its purpose is the alleviation of soil compaction, and in so doing will allow air, water and nutrients to reach the root zone. The Merado can be hired from WPB for this purpose at a rate of R750 per green. Contact Trevor Wheeler by Whatsapp, to make arrangements (Cell 072 992 4019).

By June/July greenkeepers can stop fertilizing. This is the time to arrange for new levels to be taken so that low and high areas are identified and can be corrected during renovation.

Once new levels are done (and captured using the Cubitt spreadsheet) you can estimate volumes and costs of top dressing needed. Where necessary, work out the costs of labour, materials and equipment that will be needed and discuss the costs and timing with the Committee.

The **useful contacts** page on the website has been updated, follow the link below (https://greenscare.wpbowls.co.za/contacts/)