

RT ClearCast Green – worm cast suppression

Background

Worm casts cause a real problem for Fine Turf professionals, impacting on playing surfaces both in terms of playability and quality, damaging mowers, causing unsightly cast smears and providing an ideal space for broadleaved weeds to germinate and colonise the turf. However, we also all know that worms are a very important beneficial in the soil flora and fauna.

Earthworms are classified as a key beneficial species, it is highly unlikely any pesticide will be developed to control worms. The global market for this use is very small in comparison with many other uses.

Greenkeepers and Groundsmen will, in the future, have to use a combination of cultural and nutritional approaches to manage earthworm populations in order to reduce surface casts. To achieve this objective, we need to know more about the problem worm species and create an environment that they do not like.

In the UK only 3, of the 25 odd species found, are known to produce surface casts.



Two of these are Epigeic species and one is an Anecic species. The former live near the surface and are adapted to survive the variable conditions found in this area of the soil. The later species live deep in the soil profile in permanent burrows. Both species feed on surface litter, so the removal of surface litter is key to reducing the population of these problem species.

To produce a surface cast the worm has to be near the surface. Drier soil conditions discourage this activity, hence use of cultural techniques to improve drainage will help create an environment that is less conducive to worms.

Keeping the worms lower in the soil profile will significantly reduce surface casting without losing the benefits of worm activity in the soil profile.

Modification of pH. It has been shown in trials that the reduction of pH to acidic conditions, is less beneficial to worm populations. This technique is possible but needs to be carried out carefully to avoid other nutritional problems.

Addition of sulphur – sulphur is antagonistic to worms? – work is being done to determine the science behind this comment.

RT ClearCast Green – worm cast suppression

From our understanding of the worm cast problem Rigby Taylor have developed a product which has no detrimental effect on the worms but aids greenkeepers and groundsman in the reduction of worm casting in fine turf areas.

Product

ClearCast Green is a unique combination of nutrient materials that have been shown to reduce worm cast levels on sports turf. Close scientific evaluation has shown that this new product does not kill worms or reduce populations, but does deter worms from travelling through the treated soil. It has a unique surfactant system that holds the nutrient into the upper soil structure and fixes it there providing good persistence of deterrent effect until breaking down to natural nutrients absorbed by plant roots. RT ClearCast can be used with absolute safety from first tiller formed on new sown turfs at low rates. It can be applied year-round on established turf. Best results and longer persistency are obtained in cool soil conditions.

Application

ClearCast Green needs to be applied evenly to areas needing worm cast suppression

-) Initial Application rate is 20 l/Ha
-) Followed by 21 days later an additional 7 l/Ha
-) If required additional applications can be applied every 10 to 20 days at 7 l/Ha
-) Apply product in a minimum of 250 litres of water per Ha
-) Product should be applied as a coarse sprays
-) 10 litre pack
-) Do not use water conditioners, acidifiers or tank mix with product that are acid or acidify spray water

Product details

Nutrient based blend of a minimum of 5% amino nitrogen and a minimum of 15% organic sulphur with added surfactant system