
Suggested Equipment List

Specialized equipment is necessary to maintain natural turfgrass and synthetic surfaces on sports fields. Trained staff, using the right equipment on a sound maintenance schedule can positively affect the quality of the playing surface.

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) is developing a series of advisory bulletins on synthetic and natural fields. The bulletins are sequenced to provide information and resources throughout the process of selecting and building a new sports field. Often decisions that seem small and insignificant in the short-term can affect the quality of the field for years to come.

Following are typical pieces of equipment used for natural and synthetic surfaces. Some equipment may be leased or services contracted out. Typically, equipment that costs \$1,000 or more should be included in the capital budget, but check with your finance and accounting department for its capital expenditure threshold.

For equipment use on synthetic surfaces, please consult your manufacturer's warranty. Information on the manufacturers and distributors of sports turf equipment can be found on STMA PowerLinks at www.sportsturfmanager.org

The content of this bulletin is intended for informational purposes and is not intended as a substitute for specific professional consultation.

Natural Surfaces

Necessary Equipment

Mower – rotary or reel type depending upon turfgrass species and quality/aesthetic requirements. Reel mowers are commonly used to maintain turfgrass at cutting heights of approximately 1.5” or lower, while rotary mowers are used when a higher height of cut is desired.

Fertilizer spreader – Fertilizer will need to be applied throughout the growing season to maintain a healthy turfgrass stand. Models are typically pulled by a tractor or utility vehicle, but walk-behind models are available for smaller applications. Annual calibration is required to deliver accurate amounts of material to the field.

Weed/pest control sprayer – Weed/pest control products will need to be applied throughout the growing season on an as needed basis to maintain healthy turfgrass. Models are typically pulled by a tractor or utility vehicle, with a 100 gallon tank (or greater) considered desirable. Annual calibration is required to deliver accurate amounts of material to the field. Backpack versions are available for small scale applications

Irrigation System – Water will need to be applied throughout the growing season to maintain a healthy turfgrass stand. Both above and below ground systems are available with a wide range of pipe, head, and nozzle types to choose from.

Aerator – Aeration should be performed two to five times per year to reduce soil compaction resulting from excessive player traffic (use). It is also a key tool in managing organic matter/thatch build-up in the rootzone. Excessive soil compaction weakens the turfgrass root system, which in turn reduces a field’s ability to withstand wear and increases its divoting potential. Highly compacted fields may become hard enough to create an unsafe environment for the athlete. Both hollow tine and solid tine models are available, with hollow tine models removing material from the rootzone (cores). A piston-action model is preferred, which is capable of pulling a 3” core. A reciprocating piston-action model are typically pulled behind a tractor or utility vehicle.

Tractor – used to mount/carry multiple pieces of equipment and load bulk materials. A model with a 50 to 60 horsepower engine, PTO of 45 horsepower, front-end loader, and turf tires is desirable.

Paint Sprayer – Game lines (side lines, yard lines, etc) will need to be painted onto the field. Paint sprayers are available in walk-behind or riding configurations. Tape measures and string lines are required for accurate painting, while templates and stencils can be used for adding numbers and logos.

Hand tools – Assorted hand tools (i.e.- rakes, shovels, hammers, string trimmer, edger, wrenches, etc) will be needed to work on small areas across the field.

Natural Surfaces, cont.

Optional Equipment

Core harvester – used to collect cores that are pulled to the surface following hollow tine aeration. This is critical for sand based rootzones, where organic matter accumulation negatively affects internal drainage, but may be unnecessary for native soils. Can be used to gather thatch, similar to a sweeper.

Overseeder – Fields should be overseeded continually throughout the season to maintain a dense turfgrass stand. A dense turfgrass stand is not only aesthetically desirable, but necessary to maintain an adequate level of playability. Various models are pulled behind a tractor, but walk-behind models (i.e.- rotary spreader) are available for small applications. Overseeders are a valuable tool when renovating a field.

Top-dresser – Fields are top-dressed with sand for a number of reasons including altering the physical properties of the rootzone, preventing thatch build-up, and smoothing the surface. Top-dressers can be mounted to utility vehicles or pulled behind a tractor. A model capable of carrying 1 cubic yard is desirable.

Verticutter – Vertical mowing (verticutting) is performed on an as needed basis to remove thatch from the rootzone. Can remove thatch, relieve shallow compaction and may be appropriate to use prior to seeding for good seed-to-soil contact. It can also be used to break up cores following hollow tine aeration. Verticutting units are typically pulled behind a tractor, but walk behind models are available for smaller areas.

Deep-tine aerator – Deep tine aeration is done on an as needed basis to alleviate soil compaction at levels deeper (lower) than those reached during conventional aeration. Models are typically pulled behind a tractor.

Truck / Utility vehicle – A truck or utility vehicle is used to move assorted pieces of equipment as well as materials. Models should be capable of holding two passengers, capable of towing 1500 pounds, and have a hydraulic lift bed with a capacity of at least 800 pounds

Hoses/Nozzles – Hoses and specialized nozzles are needed for small scale irrigation (syringing). They are a necessary piece of equipment for baseball fields, as they are used to manage moisture on skinned areas.

Turf sweeper/Blower/Vaccum – Turf sweepers, blowers, and vaccums are used to remove debris from fields. Turf sweepers can be used to remove debris from vertical mowing and as a replacement to the core harvester in removing cores brought to the surface following hollow tine aeration. These pieces can be pulled behind a tractor, but walk-behind models are available for small applications.

Skidster – Versatile piece of equipment used for multiple applications based on attachment (i.e.- front end loader, plow, fork-lift). A model with turf tracks is desirable.

Synthetic Surfaces

Necessary Equipment

Grooming/Spiking equipment – typically some type of broom, brush or tine that is dragged over the field to stand the synthetic fibers up and re-distribute the crumb rubber. This practice is analogous to aerating natural turfgrass fields, as it reduces compaction of rubber particles and prevents fields from becoming excessively hard. Models can be pulled behind a tractor or utility vehicle.

Sprayer – Liquid applications will be required to prevent weeds from growing through the synthetic surface and lessen the static charge from the crumb rubber. Wetting agents are applied on an as needed basis to improve infiltration of water into the rubber. Sanitation products may need to be applied to prevent bacterial growth from bodily fluids. Models are typically pulled by a tractor or utility vehicle, with a 100 gallon tank (or greater) considered desirable. Annual calibration is required to deliver accurate amounts of material to the field. Backpack versions are available for small scale applications

Top-dresser – Crumb rubber will have to periodically be applied to the field, as some material is lost over time. Top-dressers can be mounted to utility vehicles or pulled behind a tractor. A model capable of carrying 1 cubic yard is desirable.

Utility vehicle – A utility vehicle is used to move assorted pieces of equipment as well as materials. Models should be capable of holding two passengers, capable of towing 1500 pounds, and have hydraulic lift bed with a capacity of at least 800 pounds

Turf Sweeper/Blowers/Vacuum – Turf Sweepers, blowers, and vacuums are used to blow trash such as sunflower seeds and peanut shells off the playing surface. Models can be towed behind a tractor. Backpack models are available for smaller applications.

Hand tools – Assorted hand tools (i.e.- rakes, shovels, hammers, string trimmer, edger, wrenches, etc) will be needed to work on small areas across the field.

Optional Equipment

Irrigation System – Water may need to be applied to reduce the temperature of the playing surface. Some manufacturers require irrigation to maintain the manufacturer's warranty. Both above and below ground systems are available with a wide range of pipe, head, and nozzle types to choose from.

Hoses/Nozzles – Hoses and specialized nozzles are needed for small scale irrigation (syringing). They are a necessary piece of equipment for baseball fields, as they are used to manage moisture on skinned areas.

Paint Sprayer – Game lines (side lines, yard lines, etc) may need to be painted onto the field if they are not in-laid. Paint sprayers are available in walk-behind or riding configurations. Tape measures and string lines are required for accurate painting, while templates and stencils can be used for adding numbers and logos, if they are not in-laid.

Mechanical Scrubbers – Mechanical scrubbers can be used to remove painted lines from the playing surface. Pressure washers- Pressure washers are used to remove unwanted fluids or contaminants from the surface.

Rubber blade snow plow – A rubber blade snow plow is used to remove snow from the field without damaging the playing surface