

Grower Story

Award in Golf Excellence

Grower: Phil Soegaard

Location: Lakelands Golf Course, QLD

Superintendent Phil Soegaard, who uses the Petrik Soil Health program, has just been announced Winner of the 2017 Superintendent Excellence Award.

Phil has achieved impressive changes in the greens and fairways at Lakelands Golf Course, QLD, all while using less fertiliser and less water. Addressing core problems such as thatch decomposition, water infiltration and nutrient availability with the implementation of the Petrik soil health program that includes biological inputs and mineral balancing.

The resilience he has built in the system is standout. "February this year was extremely hot and dry." explains Phil. "We normally expect the sandy fairways and greens to burn off, but instead they stayed green. All the things we've been doing helped it hold on."

Whether it's in sporting fields, horticulture, cropping or pasture, biological activity leads to soil structure gains, better water infiltration and deeper roots — bringing robustness to the dryer months.

Even Colour in Greens

Another change is the use of applied nitrogen. By integrating biological activity into the system, nutrient availability has improved. "We now use less nitrogen and yet the course is still always green. The evenness has been great." explains Phil, "as not only has it saved money, we no longer get the peaks and troughs where fertiliser drops in and out

Working with people like Phil Soegaard is rewarding for us. He understands the importance of soil structure and nutrient efficiencies and how this can be achieved. Judging for the award is based on diverse factors ranging from environmental impact, to budget, course quality and involvement in industry. It is great to see his achievements awarded.



Thatch Decomposition

Decomposition of thatch in the greens was what initially got Phil interested in our soil health program. The organic matter that used to be a problem is now converted through to humus building a highly efficient soil profile.

Phil says, "The soil structure has improved significantly and the system further improves each year. We accumulate less thatch and get a cleaner soil profile. We have much better infiltration and less water ponding, compared to six years ago."

Water Use Efficiency

Phil explains the importance of water usage efficiency and being able to reduce water application. "The quality of water here being poor. It is recycled and high in salts and so the less applied water the better. As the infiltration has improved, we have been able to reduce our irrigation application."