

TURF TWISTERS

SAND LAYER AND ROOTING

Question: Most of our putting greens have a thin sand layer about an inch below the surface. The bentgrass roots go only as deep as the sand layer. I have been watering real often. My chairman says I am watering too much. How can I manage these greens and how can I answer my chairman's criticism? (INDIANA)

Answer: You do have a serious problem, indeed. It is a tribute to your skill and ability that you kept these greens through the summer. Turf with a shallow root system certainly must be watered frequently. However, it won't need much water at each application.

The real solution to your problem is to break up the layer. We suggest you aerify these greens a couple of times in spring and again in the fall of each year. The layer is so shallow that the machine will penetrate to this depth easily. Then break up the soil cores and mat them in as a topdressing. These operations should be done in cool weather only and at a time when grass is growing rapidly enough to heal the scars quickly.

Beginning in the spring, try to extend the period between irrigations as much as possible. A little moisture stress sometimes creates a condition conducive to a more profuse root system. As weather warms up you will have to decrease the interval between irrigations.

Show your chairman the layer and explain the reason for your frequent irrigation. He's lucky you kept the greens. We hope he'll recognize his good fortune.

SEEDLINGS AND TRAFFIC

Question: When we plant our winter grass on Tifgreen greens, we get a good stand except in the center of the greens where we need it most. The greens are all seeded just alike. Why does this happen? (ARKANSAS)

Answer: Chances are good that traffic has damaged the young seedlings around the normal "cupping area." The cup location always should be moved frequently, but this is especially important when new seedlings are trying to develop.

While seedlings are young, we suggest you set that flagstick closer to the edge of the green. You can set it within about 15 feet of the edge of most greens without having an unfair location. Then rotate the position around the outer portion of the green. The center still will get more than its share of the wear.