

TURF TWISTERS

ONE STEP BACKWARD

Question: Can you account for the degeneration which appears to take place in some Penncross bentgrass greens? For instance, we have two Penncross greens which were seeded a year earlier than our others. These have become puffy and off-colored, even though the management is exactly the same. (Massachusetts)

Answer: It seems most probable that you used poor quality seed on the two older greens. If the seed is not grown properly, Penncross can revert back toward one of its three parents. The present certification program has greatly reduced the amount of trash seed on the market. This seed is a result of a few unscrupulous growers who refuse to abide by the certification procedures. Use certified seed purchased from reputable dealers.

YARDAGE MARKERS

Question: During the 1966 United States Open Championship, I understand the USGA allowed yardage markers on some holes. Is it now permissible to plant distinctive shrubs or trees in rough areas to mark the exact yardage to a green? (California)

Answer: The USGA erected several distance markers at 250 yards from the tee at the 1966 Open solely for the purpose of allowing spectators to know how far the players were driving.

Actually, nothing in the Rules of Golf prohibits use of markers indicating the distance to the putting greens. However, this does not alter the long-standing USGA policy of generally removing distance markers from courses entertaining Championships whenever possible.

MY OLD KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS

Question: I would like to have your comments concerning bluegrass for use as a fairway turf in my area. (Indiana)

Answer: Common Kentucky bluegrass is gradually finding general disapproval as fairway turf in the Mid-west. For the grass to survive, it must be maintained at 1¼ inches and most of today's golfers strongly object to this kind of fairway lie.

At the present time, a number of commercial enterprises are selecting bluegrass which will withstand a shorter cutting height. Some look very promising. In addition, research stations such as Purdue and Rutgers Universities are working with bluegrass in an effort to develop strains that will form a suitable turf at ½ to ¾ inch height of cut. In that Kentucky bluegrass is apomictic (does not cross-breed readily), this work does have limitations.

As a result of current interest in bluegrass breeding and selection, more suitable types for use in golf turf will be forthcoming. At present the Merion strain continues to be the most suitable, if properly handled.