

TURF TWISTERS

SALTY SOIL?

Question: Our club has been advised to use calcium chloride on fairways to counteract high pH and an accumulation of sodium in the soil. Do you agree? (Colorado)

Answer: You may expect that the use of calcium chloride will bring about some exchange of calcium for sodium in the soil. It appears that beneficial results, however, will depend upon an ability to flush out the sodium which is displaced by calcium. The success of such treatments requires good drainage. If good drainage is not possible, the result may be simply an increase in the salinity of the soil.

COLOR ME GREEN?

Question: I have been told that I should apply Epsom salts to my greens. Is someone pulling my leg? If not, how is this done and at what rates? (Maryland)

Answer: Epsom salts (Magnesium sulphate) acts very much like iron sulphate to give the turf a green color quickly. This is usually mixed with a fungicide or other spray material at the rate of one ounce per 1,000 square feet. The magnesium in Epsom salts and dolomitic limestone acts directly on the chlorophyll molecule of the plant to improve color. Although the material is relatively safe in every respect at this rate, it should be used sparingly as you would use any other secondary or trace element.

GREEN VELVET?

Question: Is Velvet bentgrass adaptable in the Midwest? We have numerous spots on our greens and we think it's great. (Minnesota)

Answer: We have observed, especially in the more northern parts of the Midwest where greens were originally seeded to South German bentgrass, that large patches of Velvet bentgrass have persisted. Indeed, they are beautiful and present a desirable putting surface. Nonetheless, farther south and away from the immediate shores of the Great Lakes, this type of bentgrass is severely damaged as a result of disease activity. Velvet bentgrass is extremely slow to recover from such damage and has not proven suitable as a turf cover.