

TURF TWISTERS

A BLADE OF GRASS

Question: Recently on television and in several magazine ads, a mid-western company promoted the use of artificial turf for housing developments, apartments and buildings to replace God's "green earth" and nature's oxygen manufacturing plant.

It is my understanding that one reason for today's air pollution is the destruction of vegetation, trees, shrubs and grass in the path of paving and building. It seems strange to promote artificial vegetation when the world is gasping for breath. Any comments? (California)

Answer: Yes. Let's trust that good judgement and common sense will return to those who breathe. Plant a tree, a bush, a blade of grass!

CAN'T BE

Question: Can it not be true that artificial covers, such as polyethylene and the newer screening materials really reduce winter injury? (New York)

Answer: When utilizing covers of any type we are altering the microclimate. The micro-climate refers to the environmental conditions which exist in close proximity to the turfgrass plants. Covers and screens are effective in controlling moisture loss, restricting low temperatures and buffering against rapid temperature fluctuations and therefore can minimize or eliminate damaging effects of desiccation and low temperature injury. Tests at Rhode Island State University, Michigan State University, and in Canada all show reduced winter injury in severe winters and quicker green-up in the spring in mild winters. (See article "Reducing Winter Damage on Putting Greens" in this issue.)

Securing covers had been a difficulty in the past and care must be taken when covering a green so that high winds do not blow covers away. Boards, tires, and in the case of screens, roofing nails have proven effective in holding covers in place.

ALL BAD

Question: Can we build a golf course over an abandoned garbage disposal site? An architect says we can. (New York)

Answer: After our telephone conversation we talked with soils men at Rutgers University and they confirm our earlier conclusion that it would be extremely hazardous to construct a golf course on a garbage disposal site. There are too many possible pitfalls and future agronomic problems. It would therefore be worth your while to get expert advice from soils men at Cornell University before proceeding. Test borings would have to be made to study the possible rate of decomposition of the garbage, if not presently well composed.

Also, because of projected agronomic problems, two feet of topsoil at minimum would be required over the site. This would mean using 3,225 cubic yards of topsoil and fill per acre. If you have 100 acres in grass, this total comes to 322,500 cubic yards of soil. In our humble opinion this is all a bad and costly bet!