

TURF TWISTERS

HELP

Question: I've been asked about the mercury pollution problem that I may have caused when using mercury base fungicides. Have you any information that might help? (Maryland)

Answer: Work that has been done in Canada and the United States shows that with the exceptions of very poorly drained soils, mercury applied to the soil has remained in the soil and after 30 years none has been deeper than 18 inches. Keep in mind that agricultural uses of mercury are not the major pollutants. In 1970 the agricultural industry only used 2.9 per cent of all the mercury consumed.

THE (SALTED) GRASS PLANT

Question: What can one do to nullify the effect of salts on turf flooded by salty water? (New York)

Answer: Some seaside courses occasionally experience salt water flooding from the ocean. The degree of injury depends on the time of year that the flooding occurs, and how long the flood water remains on the turf. If flooded during the growing season, the kill is greater and more severe; if the flooding occurs during the winter season, while the turf is dormant, or if it doesn't remain too long, then the kill usually is not as severe.

The corrective measures that superintendents attempt are:

- 1) They immediately irrigate with fresh water in the attempt to leach out or dissipate the salt to some degree.
- 2) They apply ground limestone and gypsum in mixture or separately using each at the rates of 1,000 to 2,000 pounds per acre.
- 3) In flooded areas, strains of grasses that survive are plugged and planted throughout the area of injury in the attempt to cover it with these strains that apparently have some degree of salt tolerance. These are mostly creeping bentgrass strains although *Puccinellia distans* is probably the most salt-tolerant of all turf-grass plants.

TO GROW ON BANKS

Question: We have a steep bank, one almost too steep to mow safely which is in an out-of-play area but in close proximity to the clubhouse, so we would like to keep it in a grass cover that will not require mowing. Is there any grass that will grow 8 to 10 inches tall, that will grow dense enough to retain the sharp slope and not look unsightly? (Maine)

Answer: Try Merion, Pennstar or Fylking bluegrass sod or seed. It will meet all these requirements. The only time that it may be a problem is when it produces seed in May, the seed stalks will grow taller but will eventually taper off again and will hardly be noticeable in the fall. While these grasses grow more than 10 inches long, they lodge (lay over) and so appear to be less than 10 inches tall.