

TURF TWISTERS

SANDS TOO SOFT

Question: For years my membership has complained about hard sand in the bunkers. This summer I acquired a mechanical sand rake to save some weeding and raking labor, and to soften the hard sand. Now they complain that the sand is too soft. What can I do? (Conn.)

Answer: Perhaps in your case you are raking the sand too deeply and/or too frequently. First, check the setting for depth of the rake and adjust accordingly. Depending upon the bunkers themselves and the type of sand in them, only a complete raking with the machine once or twice a week may be necessary. On the off days, only the outstanding footprints could be smoothed. This should keep the sand soft (as it should be) but not too fluffy, and also it should reduce the total labor involved.

FOR BLUEGRASS BLENDS

Question: We are hearing a lot about new strains of Kentucky bluegrasses developed through breeding programs like the one the Green Section is supporting at Rutgers University. How do these new grasses stand up to Merion, the first of the improved varieties, and in my mind still one of the best. (New Jersey)

Answer: You are right. Merion is still one of the best Kentucky bluegrasses. All Kentucky bluegrasses, including Merion, and even the new varieties, have some weaknesses. There is no one best Kentucky bluegrass for any area of the country. It is for this reason that we recommend blends of three, four, five or even more of these improved grasses. With more water, fertilizer, and lower cuts, it is imperative that these improved strains be used to replace the common types. When choosing a blend of Kentucky bluegrasses, it would be to your advantage to attend university field days to see for yourself which of these grasses does best in your area. With this information you could then set up your own blend of the grasses that you like and that performs the best for your region.

ON WINTER GREENS

Question: Help! Help! We usually have a heavy infestation of *Poa annua* in our overseeded bermuda greens by mid to late winter. What can we do? (Miss. and Ariz.)

Answer: The use of a pre-emergence herbicide prior to overseeding has been very effective but hazardous. You might hold off on the pre-emergence material until late November or early December. This should give the fall overseeding a chance to become established and still check *Poa annua* germination in the early winter months.