

TURF TWISTERS

AGENTS THAT MELT

Question: Will the runoff from the salt and other melting agents used on our winter paddle tennis courts injure our turf this spring? (New Jersey and Massachusetts)

Answer: Every ice-melting agent that we know of has the **potential** of harming the turf, either through extremely heavy use or a buildup in the soil over several years. In reality, however, except in extreme cases, little harm should be done with the natural dilution of the agents with the snow and normal yearly rainfall. But don't overuse or abuse them. Use just enough to do the job and only then when needed. In our travels, we have seen instances where heavy duty forced air heaters have been installed under the courts to melt the ice and snow naturally. But this was before the era of the energy crunch.

FERTILIZERS THAT SPIRAL

Question: With fertilizer prices spiraling, where should I send my soil samples for chemical analysis? (Georgia)

Answer: You are right! The key to growing good grass economically in this day and age lies in soil testing. But test results are only as good as (a) proper sampling methods; (b) a good laboratory; (c) competent interpretation of results by someone familiar with turfgrass requirements. Check with your County Extension Agent, State Laboratory or Green Section representative. There are reputable commercial and fertilizer company laboratories as well, but they should have a background in turfgrass management.

TWO ROWS THAT FAIL

Question: We're thinking of an automatic irrigation system this year. Is a "two-row" system adequate under semi-arid conditions? (Colorado)

Answer: A "two-row" system is inadequate under most conditions, semi-arid or not. It heavily irrigates the center of fairways while leaving the perimeter and rough areas relatively dry. If your club is interested in uniformity of playing conditions, a "two-row" system is generally not the answer.