

TURF TWISTERS

BUD BREAK

Question: I've received permission to begin a more systematic program of maintenance for my club's key ornamental and shade trees. Can you think of something which I may have overlooked in my program enclosed? (Connecticut)

Answer: Your projected program is fine, but so many ornamentals (and shade trees) are bothered by insects that overwinter on the plants that a sound maintenance program should begin with a dormant oil spray just prior to bud break in the spring. Caution — the label will list species which may be severely damaged by such sprays. Dormant oil spray is not for all plants. If in doubt, contact your University Extension Service.

STEM ELONGATION

Question: What is gibberellic acid, how is it produced, and how does it affect grasses? (Georgia)

Answer: Gibberellic acid is a plant-regulating chemical. It is produced by a fungus grown in liquid culture medium from which the acid is extracted. The process is similar to that used in the production of antibiotics. Grasses respond by rapid blade growth and stem elongation, and color changes to a slightly lighter green.

AND ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

Question: Two of our greens usually come through the winter in very poor condition. What can we do to put these greens back into good playing condition as early as possible? (Maine)

Answer: If the greens are injured over a large area, they should be closed, using temporary greens until recovery is complete. Slice and seed the injured areas in two directions and make a light application of topdressing. An alternative would be to aerate, spike, topdress and overseed. Maintain adequate moisture near the surface for seed germination and development by careful, frequent syringing each day. Also, get to the root of the cause and take corrective measures so that this problem does not reoccur annually.