

TURF TWISTERS

SHADY BLUEGRASS

Question: I have recently heard that Kentucky bluegrass can be used in shady areas. What varieties are suggested? (West Virginia)

Answer: A blend of Kentucky bluegrasses with a small percentage of fine fescue has given excellent turfgrass cover in shady areas. The better shade-tolerant Kentucky bluegrasses include Nugget, Birka, Bristol, Glade, A-34, Merion, and Victa.

IS NOT ALWAYS EQUAL

Question: I have a mixed stand of bentgrass and *Poa annua* in my greens. Each spring, when *Poa annua* is in flower, I notice that some of the patches of *Poa annua* simply do not flower. I have looked closely at the patches and they certainly look like annual bluegrass, but they don't flower like *Poa annua*. What's going on? (Kentucky)

Answer: What you are probably looking at are patches of sterile *Poa annua*. In research on annual bluegrass, supported by the Green Section some years ago, it was established that there are several distinct subspecies of *Poa annua*. They are *Poa annua* var. *annua* L. Timm, *Poa annua* var. *reptans* (Hauskins) Timm, and *Poa supina* Schrad. These are all discreetly different grasses within what we call *Poa annua* or annual bluegrass. We suspect that there could be even more of these subspecies as more becomes known about the very variable plant which we simply call *Poa annua*. Obviously, all *Poa annuas* are not created equal.

TO THE GROOVY

Question: Neighboring superintendents and I are having a controversy over the use of solid versus grooved rollers. What are the advantages of grooved rollers? (Louisiana)

Answer: Grooved rollers are more beneficial in producing a better putting surface because they encourage more upright growth habit of the grass. The surface area of the grooved roller is tremendously reduced, thus they do not lay the grass down as much in front of the bedknife. Reels with grooved rollers also have a truer cutting height than do those with solid front rollers.

LONESOME WIND

Question: Do tree windbreaks between fairways reduce irrigation needs of the turf by reducing evaporation and transpiration losses? (Colorado)

Answer: Well, yes and no! Tree windbreaks may reduce the direct loss from evaporation and transpiration by turf in windy areas. They also help to create a more desirable atmosphere for playing golf on the windswept high plains. However, it is very doubtful that they reduce water loss on the golf course property. Tree roots are often found running under the fairways. The trees pump into the atmosphere more than enough water to make up for what the turf may not use because it is growing on a wind-protected fairway.