

TURF TWISTERS

ONE OF GOLF'S ENDANGERED SPECIES

Question: We are considering adding nine holes to our course later this year. Is velvet bentgrass a good choice for the greens? (Vermont)

Answer: In five words, velvet bentgrass has quite a few problems. Thatching characteristics are very strong. It is slow to recover from damage and it is disease-prone. In addition, seed is increasingly difficult to obtain, meaning stolonization is necessary in most cases. Velvet bentgrass should be on the endangered species list.

IS OVERWORKED . . .

Question: Why are crops smaller in salty soils? (Arizona)

Answer: According to Dr. R. H. Nieman, of the U.S. Salinity Laboratory, Riverside, California, plants overwork themselves trying to compensate for the effects of salt. To keep their needed high osmotic pressure and get moisture from salty soil requires so much energy they don't have enough left to promote normal crop growth.

LEAVE A LADDER FOR THE RESCUE

Question: My problem is winter ice skaters. What can be done to deter them from using the pond on my golf course? (Illinois)

Answer: This is a difficult undertaking — as you already know. “NO TRESPASSING” signs should be posted, but they are generally ignored. Sometimes logs are thrown out in the pond to break up the surface for the skaters, but oftentimes they are not very effective. Perhaps the next best thing to do (after you've checked to see your liability insurance covers any skating problems) is to invest in or build a cheap ladder and keep it near the pond. If anyone falls through the ice, a ladder is one of the best means to rescue the person and save a life. The ladder need not be fancy, preferably metal (wooden ones are likely to end up as firewood), and by just being there — at least you have tried to protect yourself and perhaps help the trespassing skater.