

TURF TWISTERS

MOTHER GOOSE

Question: Four of our bermudagrass greens have consistently developed very severe goosegrass infestations by midsummer. Efforts to control the goosegrass with post-emergent herbicide treatments have produced limited success. Is there an alternative approach to maintaining an acceptable level of goosegrass control on the greens? (Florida)

Answer: First, determine why these particular greens have more of a severe weed problem. Do surrounding factors such as shade, poor air circulation, tree root competition, concentrated traffic patterns, or soil profile problems limit turf growth? Next, consider using a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent the weed seeds from germinating. Although most pre-emergent herbicides are not labeled for use on putting greens, a combination material is available, consisting of bensulide and oxadiazon, that controls severe goosegrass infestations on both bermuda and bentgrass greens. Your local manufacturer's representative should be contacted to discuss application rates. Of course, there is always the old standby of hosting a goosegrass party for the crew, and simply using knives to cut the goosegrass crowns out of the putting surfaces.

LEASES EQUIPMENT

Question: It seems our golf course is always maintained with older equipment. We are a small club that doesn't have the means to purchase new equipment regularly. Do you have any suggestions for an alternative means of equipment procurement? (Idaho)

Answer: Unfortunately, unlike gravity, equipment prices do not go down. Many golf courses report success with equipment leasing programs with a purchase buy-out at the end of the lease. While this may or may not be more expensive than actual equipment purchase, you can usually begin using the piece of equipment for less money down, lower payments, and bring about immediate improvement in turf playing quality.

FOR MAKING NURSERY RHYMES

Question: How critical is it to have a putting green nursery? Should it be built to USGA specifications? How big should it be? (Nebraska)

Answer: Think of a nursery as a spare tire. If the tires on your vehicle are well made and new, the spare will likely go unused for quite some time. However, every wise driver keeps a spare ready for emergencies, regardless of the condition of his tires. Likewise, every course should have a nursery. Although it is certainly ideal to build the nursery to specs, the most critical factor is that the root zone mixture is compatible with the soil on the existing greens. As for size, a general rule of thumb is to build a nursery to the size of one average green. However, for courses where the greens are frequently under stress from weather, heavy play, etc., the bigger the nursery the better.