

TURF TWISTERS

POUR ON THE SAND

Question: We have installed miles of drain tiles on our fairways and still have very wet playing conditions during the winter months. Do you have any suggestions for minimizing imbedded playing conditions during the winter? (Washington)

Answer: Topdressing with sand may be your answer! Used widely on greens and tees, sand topdressing has produced excellent results on many fairways in the Pacific Northwest. It is a viable means of providing good footing, improving surface drainage, and eliminating imbedded balls on fairway areas. With the proper equipment, a reasonably priced sand source, and a good topdressing schedule during the growing season, definite improvements are usually seen in one or two years.

TO ENLARGE OR REBUILD

Question: We have several small greens that cannot stand up to the amount of play they receive, and we wish to enlarge them. Should we build the new additions to USGA specifications? (Ohio)

Answer: In lieu of completely rebuilding the greens, your best bet would be to match the soil types as closely as possible. If the original greens were constructed of native soil, the additions should also be constructed of native soil. If the soil types vary significantly between the new and old parts of each green, maintenance will be complicated since the different areas will have distinctly different water, nutrient, and management requirements.

More often than not, adding a new section to an old green does not work out well. It is very difficult to match soil types, even with laboratory assistance. Eventually, many of these expanded greens undergo complete reconstruction.

THOSE TIRED TEES

Question: We have a couple of back tees where it is not possible to maintain a dense bermudagrass cover because of a shade situation. The membership is strongly opposed to further tree removal, but they still want these tees maintained in top condition because of their high visibility. Do you have any suggestions? (Florida)

Answer: An approach that has worked quite well at other Florida courses has been to establish a zoysiagrass turf cover. There are a couple of new hybrid zoysia selections that are similar in appearance to the hybrid bermudas but have better shade tolerance. Give zoysiagrass a try, but if successful results are not achieved, the membership will have to accept less than perfect turf conditions or else part with a few more trees.