

TURF TWISTERS

KEEP SMALL SAMPLES

Question: Many clubs in this area were damaged last season by a fungicide contaminated with simazine. Is there anything we can do to protect ourselves from this in the future? (Missouri)

Answer: Although such problems are rare, they do occur despite the best efforts of the manufacturers. While it is impractical to test every product prior to use, it is a good practice to keep a small sample of the applied pesticide for proof should damage occur. Keep a sample from each lot number in the original container. If no damage occurs, apply the remaining product during the following application.

OF MILKY SPORE DISEASE

Question: To reduce insecticide use, we are considering applying milky spore disease to control white grubs on our golf course. Any thoughts on this? (New Hampshire)

Answer: Milky spore disease can be an effective biological control measure for Japanese beetle grubs, but it is ineffective against other white grub species. It also requires several years to colonize a population large enough to be effective, and this often doesn't happen at latitudes further north than New York City. Other chemical controls must be withheld from inoculated areas since insecticides will also reduce the milky spore population. Therefore, you must be willing to live with some insect damage while waiting for milky spore to do its thing. Historically, milky spore disease has not been considered a viable alternative to insecticide use under most golf course situations. Research on this and other biological controls for white grubs is ongoing, however, and perhaps there will soon be an effective biological control available.

TO CHECK OUT THE STORY

Question: The caption for the cover photo of your May/June 1990 issue described that profile as meeting USGA specifications for green construction. It didn't look so great to me. What's the story? (Michigan and Idaho)

Answer: Good for you for recognizing a profile from one of the many infamous "modified" USGA greens that didn't work. It was being dug up at the time the picture was taken to be replaced by the real thing. The contractor went so far as to put in the drain tile, gravel bed and coarse sand layer, but he "didn't have time" to have the topmix checked out at a soils laboratory. This story is, "modified USGA greens" *are not* USGA greens!