USGA GREEN SECTION RECORD
MAY/JUNE 1992

TURF TWISTERS

FOR HEALTHY TURF

Question: We have experienced a very mild winter in the Northeast and the golfers have loved it! What does this mean for turf managers in terms of potential problems in 1992? (New Jersey)

Answer: The mild winter may well be a precursor to severe summer problems if the weather is stressful. The soil compaction and turf thinning that occur from winter play on dormant putting green turf tend to encourage establishment of *Poa annua*, crabgrass, and other weeds, and turf root growth will suffer unless corrective soil cultivation is carried out. Thus, with more *Poa annua* and weaker rooting, 1992 may be a tough year for golf course superintendents wherever winter play on dormant turf was heavy.

INCREASE AIR MOVEMENT

Question: I continue to hear about the importance of air movement for the growth of strong, healthy golf course turf. How much air movement is needed to prevent stagnant air causing stress to the turf? (West Virginia)

Answer: Experience has shown that a 3 mph breeze is enough to reduce stress on the turf. Stress is more significant in stagnant, pocketed areas on the golf course. Selectively removing trees and clearing underbrush can help increase air movement in pocketed locations. In areas where the trees and underbrush cannot, or will not, be removed, fans are successfully being used to increase air movement.

ACROSS GREENS

Question: During the peak of our summer season, the only green that fails to sustain complete turf cover is the practice putting green. Short of closing it every other day to reduce the amount of foot traffic, is there anything else we can do? (Arizona)

Answer: If the root of the problem is foot traffic, as opposed to a nutrient deficiency or fungal attack, encourage golfers to practice in soft-soled street shoes. As a point of reference, the practice greens at several USGA championships have been closed to all spiked golf shoes to preserve good quality putting conditions.