

TURF TWISTERS

FEED THE TURF

Question: I occasionally hear the term *spoon feeding*. What does this refer to? (Indiana)

Answer: *Spoon feeding* refers to applying fertilizers at light rates and more frequent intervals. Normally, it is a strategy used primarily in putting green maintenance. It often involves the use of a complete (N, P, and K) analysis soluble fertilizer. Application rates often are in the range of $\frac{1}{10}$ th pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet, every seven to ten days. Obviously, this can vary slightly to fit the specific needs of a maintenance program. The idea behind *spoon feeding* is not to push additional growth, but to simply maintain the plants' immediate needs.

AT THE RIGHT RATE, BUT

Question: I hope I never need this information, but what's the rate for activated charcoal applications? (Maryland)

Answer: We recommend a light rate of 5 lbs. of actual material per 1,000 sq. ft. (225 lbs. per acre). Rates could be even higher. We have heard recommended rates as high as 300-600 lbs. actual material per acre. Obviously, the amount of charcoal needed is dependent upon the amount of material you are trying to deactivate. The activation sites are limited so higher rates provide more rapid deactivation of the target material (e.g., a preemergence herbicide). Regardless of the rate, any amount of activated charcoal is very messy and difficult to apply. If activated charcoal applications are warranted, they should be carefully targeted only to the area requiring treatment.

ALWAYS CALIBRATE!

Question: How often should we calibrate our sprayer? (Virginia)

Answer: Each time you plan to spray an area of the course, the sprayer should be calibrated for accuracy. This provides the opportunity to check your sprayer for plugged or defective nozzles prior to treating the turf. New technology is on the horizon. Basically, it involves having a computer mounted on the spray rig that calculates spray volumes and square footage treated. With today's heightened awareness about chemical application, the golf course turf manager has even more responsibility to accurately apply the products necessary for turfgrass management. Do not assume that you can calibrate a sprayer in the spring and it will stay calibrated for the entire season.