

# TURF TWISTERS

## NEW VARIETIES

**Question:** Our 20-year-old Tifdwarf greens are now severely contaminated with off-type bermudagrasses and will be replanted in the next couple of years. We are considering making a switch to one of the new ultradwarf cultivars, but I am concerned about being able to overseed the greens for the winter because of the very dense turf cover that is produced. What have been the Green Section's findings in regards to winter overseeding of the ultradwarfs in the northern Florida area? (Florida)

**Answer:** When Tifdwarf was first released in the mid-1960s, winter overseeding was a concern because of its greater density compared to Tifgreen (328) bermudagrass. Superintendents across the South quickly developed successful overseeding programs, and this also is occurring today with the ultradwarfs. At a number of golf courses, satisfactory overseeding results have been achieved with ultradwarf bermuda greens using *Poa trivialis*. While we are still learning about the ultradwarfs, they are raising the bar and will more than likely replace Tifdwarf as the standard at courses where premium quality putting greens are expected or demanded.

## TRANSLATE TO

**Question:** Last year our golf course installed a new irrigation system that cost nearly \$1 million. After watching our superintendent this summer, I wonder if he knows how to use it. Some days our golf course was so dry I don't think he knew how to turn it on. Other times I saw him hand watering the greens. How can that possibly be necessary, and isn't it a ridiculous waste of time when he has a new system at his disposal? (New Jersey)

**Answer:** By the sound of it, your golf course superintendent is handling the situation correctly. The purpose of irrigating turf is to keep it alive, not make it green and lush. Dry, firm, and fast are considered the best playing conditions. Turf that is lush doesn't play as well and tends to be more prone to pest problems. With regard to the hand watering, even with perfectly built greens and a state-of-the-art irrigation system, some portions of greens dry out more quickly than others. Hand watering is a critical tool in handling those miscellaneous dry spots and still achieving top-notch playability on the putting greens.

## IMPROVED CONDITIONS

**Question:** Superintendents typically prepare budgets based on line items for various spending categories. However, I have no idea how this translates to money spent on primary playing areas. I've also been informed that I need to decrease the course operating budget by 10%. How do I show the Green Committee where the money is going, and what is my best way to prioritize those dollars? (Tennessee)

**Answer:** Using your maintenance objectives, prioritize the playing areas in order of importance. Most golf courses rank the playing areas in the following order: putting greens, fairways and green slopes, tees, rough, and hazards. Some superintendents also break out the budget percentages into the playing area categories. This method can help show the Green Committee where the money is allocated and how it is prioritized. Do not begin by reducing maintenance on the high-priority areas. Instead, target intensive tasks in the areas of low priority. The golf course may not have as many finishing touches, but quality on the important playing areas will not suffer.